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1150 Prisoners Freed

Scenes of jubilation as freed prisoners meet mothers, fathers and friends/AO

More than 600 Palestinian political prisoners, all serving sentences of over 10 years, were freed in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel May 20, in one of the largest prisoner exchange agreements ever between the PLO and Israel. They were among 1150 prisoners exchanged for three Israeli soldiers who had been held by Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) since June 1982.

The prisoner exchange agreement was concluded last April 22 after drawn-out negotiations between the PFLP-GC and Israel arranged through the International Committee of the Red Cross, former Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky and Austria's Ambassador to Turkey, Herbert Emery. Israel agreed to release 879 prisoners held in Israeli prisons, 121 former Ansar detainees left over from the previous exchange agreement of November 1983 (all PFLP-GC members) and 150 former Ansar detainees who were being held in Israeli prisons.

The prisoners released from Israeli prisons in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel constituted about one-third of the total prison population. According to local newspapers, nearly 39 percent of them were serving life sentences. Those included famous names among Palestinians like Taleb Ghaith, who was charged with carrying out 18 military operations; Ali and Mahmoud Jadeh, who were convicted for the famous "night of bombs" in 1968; and Zuheir al-Mala'bi from Shu'fat. The agreement also included the release of 11 women, nearly half of the women detainees in Israeli prisons.

The complex prisoner exchange, which the PFLP-GC called the "Galilee Operation" in reference to the Israeli name for the Lebanon war "Peace for Galilee," took place in three locations: Geneva, Quneitra in Syria, and in the occupied territories.

Israeli military sources reported that the operation began on the night of Sunday, May 19 when 394 prisoners were bused from various prisons in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza to Lod airport. Dressed in red shirts, white pants and blue sneakers, provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the prisoners had their hands tied together with plastic handcuffs. Local TV stations showed prisoners raising both hands to flash the victory sign as they boarded the Israeli planes which flew them to Geneva.

The planes arrived in Geneva shortly before noon on Monday May 20. The exchange process, however, was only completed at midnight due to delays in the arrival of one of the Israeli POWs.

Continued on page 15

Amal Besieges Palestinian Camps in Lebanon

Palestinian factions put aside their differences last week and joined hands to repel attacks by the Shi'ite Amal Movement on Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. The latest reports from Lebanon said that Amal militiamen and soldiers of the Lebanese Army's sixth brigade had succeeded in penetrating the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila in Beirut May 23, and that hand-to-hand combat is now taking place in the two camps. Burj al-Barajneh camp is reportedly still under siege.

A mass exodus out of the camps has begun. Refugees are heading for safety in the Shouf Mountains.

Later reports also said that Amal militias opened another front on May 23 when they besieged Ain al—Hilweh and Mieh Mieh refugee camps in the Sidon area.

The four days of battle, Lebanese police reports said, have left at least 125 people dead and more than 700 wounded. The Red Cross appealed to the warring parties for permission to evacuate the wounded from the camps.

Amal's incursion on the refugee camps started on the night of Sunday May 19 when large numbers of Amal militiamen surrounded the three camps in order to disarm their inhabitants. Earlier, newsmen quoted top Amal officials as saying they would not allow the Palestinians to regain control of the camps or south Lebanon. Amal leaders said: "The fighting began when Amal stopped weapons which were being brought into the camps from going through." Since the beginning of Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon, reports have surfaced that Amal had made an arrangement with Israel that it would prevent the Palestinians from rebuilding their forces in south Lebanon.

Reports said that attacks on the three camps started at the same time, and the well-armed militiamen forced the Palestinian defenders to retreat. After more than 12 hours of fighting, Amal announced that Shatila camp had fallen. According to Lebanese estimates more than 50 people were killed and 325 injured during the fighting.

The Palestinian position was enhanced during the night when they managed to repulse the Shi'ite movement's attacks after fierce hand-to-hand battles and to gain control of some positions outside the camps. According to foreign reporters, Palestinian fighters occupied several tall buildings in the area, strengthening their positions.

On the same evening, Amal brought new reinforcements to the battlefield. They also received a boost when the sixth brigade of the Lebanese Army, which is largely Shi'ite, joined Amal at the battlefront.

The fighting died down briefly after the two sides reached a fragile ceasefire, but it was short-lived, and fighting resumed with full force. Palestinian leaders appealed to Amal to end the fighting but to no avail.

The Salvation Front and the Democratic Alliance, which are both involved in the fighting alongside forces loyal to PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, appealed to the Syrian president to intervene. PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat also called on the UN Security Council and the Arab League to intervene.

On the third day of the fighting, and after Amal militias and the sixth brigade of the Lebanese army tightened their siege of the camps, Palestinian forces entrenched in the Beqa'a Valley and in the Shouf Mountains overlooking Beirut joined the battle and sent heavy barrages of fire into the militia-controlled area. According to a communique issued in Tripoli in northern Lebanon, Abu Mousa's forces announced they had given the Amal militia until 1:00 pm to stop the fighting and withdraw from around the camps. When Amal did not do so, Abu Mousa's troops opened fire from rocket launchers, and directed heavy artillery at the Shi'ite forces. Reports said that more than 100 long range ground-to-ground Grad missiles were also fired towards Shi'ite concentrations in order to relieve some of the pressure from the besieged Palestinian fighters. Reports said fighters from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) clashed with Amal troops in the village of al-Jiyeh, 20 kilometers

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Palestinians Joyously Welcome Released Prisoners

by Said al-Ghazali

In spite of threats made by settlers and some Israeli politicians against the Palestinian prisoners released in the May 20 exchange, more than 600 have chosen to remain in Israel and the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Shortly before leaving their lockups, Palestinian prisoners who expressed the desire to remain in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were given yellow cards and those who chose to go abroad were given blue cards. They also signed a list containing their names and their choice to stay or leave the country. ID cards confiscated at the beginning of prison terms were returned. Those whose IDs were missing were given papers valid for four days and instructed to apply for new IDs.

On May 20, buses carrying prisoners from other jails arrived at Jnaid prison in Nablus. More than 11 buses stayed in front of the jail until 5:00 pm full of prisoners dressed in their own clothes and wearing handcuffs. The Israelis refused to release anyone until the three Israeli POWs had been safely handed over in Geneva.

Once the buses were allowed to leave, the Israelis forced them to travel on routes that did not pass through villages, towns, and camps. Bus drivers had to

Ali Jadeh in Jerusalem

follow Israeli military jeeps leading the convoy. The buses went to Tulkarm, Qalqilya, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Gaza. At certain points, the buses would stop and prisoners would disembark in groups of 10 at a time at the point nearest their homes. Many seemed dazed, and said freedom seemed a dream too good to be true.

Many of the released prisoners chose not to go home directly, preferring to pray at al-Aqsa Mosque or visit graves of their relatives.

Palestinian families in the occupied territories united in joy and happiness when they hugged their beloved relatives freed in the prisoners exchange agreement. The unexpected release of hundreds of prisoners sparked spontaneous festivals. Released prisoners celebrated with families and friends by dancing the *dabkeh* and beating on drums. Some couldn't control themselves and burst into tears.

The same scene was visible everywhere. Residents waited for the buses to arrive in Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Tulkarm, Jenin and Gaza. Strangers placed their private cars at the disposal of prisoners, offering them rides home.

Every prisoner who arrived at home was emotionally hugged and kissed by relatives, friends, and neighbours. Sweets, soft drinks, coffee, and chocolates were distributed among congratulators. Some visitors brought sheep and sacks of sugar and rice as gifts to the celebrating families, some of whom held public feasts. Delegations representing national institutions visited prisoners and listened to stories about their release.

In Nablus hundreds of West Bank residents gathered at the entrance of Jnaid prison at dawn on May 20. They waited for more than 12 hours until 5:00 pm when the 11 buses began moving to various directions flanked by military jeeps. The prisoners in the buses held up their hands in victory signs while buses wound their way through the excited masses who flooded the streets. Aniat Shaka'a, wife of elected Nablus mayor Bassam Shaka'a, was among the crowd. Released prisoner Ribhi Haddad from Nablus told a TV reporter that he hoped his cellmates still behind bars would be released soon.

In the Old City of Jerusalem, the scene was similar. Homes of released prisoners were filled with people happily talking and drinking. Said Dadu, 43, a prisoner who was arrested in January 1971 and sentenced to 11 life sentences for carrying out 18 operations between 1968-69 and spent 15 years in Asqalon jail, couldn't believe he was free. "When I arrived in Jerusalem, I couldn't believe that I was going home to see and hug my relatives." Dadu seemed full of energy as he described prison life and its hardships to his congratulators.

Ala Bazayan, 25, a Jerusalemite, was blinded while attempting to plant a bomb in 1979. He was sentenced to three years and released in 1981. Between April and December of 1981, he organised a cell which carried out three operations. He was arrested and sentenced to 20 years in December 1981. Bazayan was very optimistic. "I congratulate all my people. There was no discrimination in this deal. It is a national achievement," he said. "The prisoners were chosen according to criteria of the number of years they had been in jail, length of sentences, and sickness." Bazayan added, "There were four people in our cell before we were arrested. Khalil Sandouka was killed during interrogation. Another escaped arrest and Ali Maslamani and I were released in the exchange agreement."

Abbas Kashour, 21, was arrested for preparing bombs with two other people in 1980 and sentenced to 15 years. The bombs they were preparing exploded. Kashour's cousin Badawi was killed, and Kashour's hand was burned and his kidney injured by shrapnel. He plans to seek medical treatment immediately.

Sami Mez'eru, 40, has not been home since 1968. He left Jerusalem for Amman to join the revolution the same year. In May of 1969, he and six other men entered the country in the south to try to organise activities. On their way to the Hebron mountains they clashed with Israeli soldiers in Wadi 'Arabi near Eilat. One fighter was killed and the others were arrested. They were all released in the exchange, although the others chose to fly to Geneva as they had no close relatives here. Mez'eru's father and mother died while he was in prison, but he cannot remember when. He made a quick visit to their graves as soon as he was released. "I am happy now with my brothers' children," he said. "However, I don't feel secure. I expect the Israeli authorities will

come at any moment and re-arrest me."

Ibrahim Owaida, 26, also from Jerusalem's Old City, was sentenced in 1979 to 25 years for carrying out two military operations in 1978. He said "what I feel is a mixture of happiness and pain. It is painful to leave brothers in jail."

Ali Mohammed Jadeh and Mahmoud Jadeh, two black Palestinians from the Old City, had been in jail since September 1968. Ali Jadeh told the story of the release: "On May 3, the director of Asqalon prison, Asher Cohen, notified prisoners about the exchange agreement. They were given the list of names. Prisoners in Asqalon and other jails argued with the Red Cross and demanded that they request the inclusion of others. Prisoners from all over the West Bank were transferred to Jnaid." Jadeh added, "Our hands were put in plastic handcuffs. Some soldiers beat me and Khaled Tantash and Ala Bazayan." Jadeh said senior Israeli officers met prisoners and asked for help in releasing the missing soldiers. He expressed amazement at the tremendous changes in the city of Jerusalem. "I do not dare to walk through the streets," he said.

Ziad Abu Ain, who was extradited from the US and jailed in 1981, was not released by the Israelis in the November 1983 prisoners exchange although his name appeared on the list. Abu Ain was very busy with his visitors, listening to their comments or describing his experience in jail. The great majority of prisoners released from Jnaid (350) have chosen to remain in the occupied territories.

Viola Sa'ati, 24, from Ramallah, who was sentenced to 12 years in 1978, was the head of the prisoners committee in Neve Terza prison. She said: "We have returned to the main arena of the struggle, and this is the source of our happiness." Sa'ati said the prison experience strengthened her beliefs and made her see things more clearly. "I believe that women prisoners have succeeded through political and cultural discussions to establish the foundations for militant Palestinian women."

Safin Mustafa Haddad, 22, from Gaza, who was sentenced

to life, told the story of prisoners released from Gaza. "We were 200 from Gaza prison. After 5:00 pm, the convoy of nine buses carrying us began to move. The buses stopped at certain points in Beit Hannoun, Beit Lahia, Jabalya and other stations. I got off at Seven-Up stand at the entrance to Gaza where I took a car to the Zaytoun quarter where my family lives. My family was astonished because they expected my brother, who has been in jail for 13 years, to be released. They thought I would be taken to Geneva. I cannot describe those moments."

Twenty-one prisoners from other countries chose not to leave. When Israelis discovered their status, they did not know what to do. They allowed these 21 prisoners to remain in the occupied territories for 21 days. One of the 21, Mohammed Beiruti, has no Israeli ID and no relatives in the country. However he decided to spend 21 days in the West Bank, at the homes of fellow prisoners.

One prisoner, Nemr Edwan from Qalqilya, will marry his fiance, 'Afifi 'Atieh Najjar, next week. Edwan was sentenced to three terms of life imprisonment and spent 17 years in jail. Nonetheless, Afifi waited for him.

Ziad Abu Ain with family /BA

IN PROTEST OF LOW PAY

Gov't Teachers Plan Day Strike May 27

The General Committee of Government School Teachers in the West Bank (GCGST) called May 19 for a one-day strike in all government schools on May 27. The strike is a protest against the Israeli rejection of their demands for better salaries and refusal to recognise their union. An earlier two-hour strike by government teachers on May 7 brought no results.

The strike call was issued during a press conference at the Professional Unions Complex in Beit Hanina. Journalists from all local Palestinian newspapers, except *Al Quds* daily, attended the press conference. Teachers at the press conference distributed copies of a statement they had sent to the Israeli officer in charge of education demanding salary increases and informing him of their intention to strike on May 27. Earlier, the GCGST distributed a statement among teachers asking them to respond to the strike call.

During the press conference, teachers said they were driven to strike by the deteriorating economic conditions they live under and by the authorities' failure to respond to their demands. They distributed a study about their salaries to journalists at the conference. Average monthly salaries are now around JD67 (about IS270,000). The study showed that according to surveys released by the Israeli Bureau of Statistics, a family of four needs around IS650,000 (JD160) to live decently. The study said that even the 100 percent salary increase they are demanding is far below the minimum income required for a family of four as stipulated by the Israeli Bureau of Statistics.

Teachers at the press conference had come from all over the West Bank except for the Bethlehem area where three were prevented from attending. They complained about the harsh measures that the Israelis had taken against them and their colleagues following the two-hour teachers strike May 7. Fadel Rimawi, a teacher at Beitunia secondary school, was arrested on May 11 for allegedly participating in the strike and attending a ceremony in memory of the late elected mayor of Ramallah, Karim Khalaf. He was released on bail May 19. His lawyer, Ibrahim Barghouthi, who came straight from the military court room in Ramallah to the press conference, said Rimawi fears the Israelis are planning to fire him without compensation using the recently amended military order 514. The order specifies that any government employee found guilty of committing any "security offense" will be fired without compensation. Other teachers expressed similar fears.

Furthermore, teachers said the directors of the regional Arab education departments, who are under the jurisdiction of the Israeli military government, tried to break up the May 7 strike on orders from the military by threatening teachers with pay-cuts and even dismissals. Teachers confirmed a report in *al-Bayader* magazine which said that the education director of the Tulkarm district spat in the face of a woman school principal in Qalqilya during a quarrel when he tried to break up the strike. Many teachers received notices from the Israeli officer in charge of education, that the two periods they were on strike will be deducted from their salaries at the end of the month.

The teachers received many solidarity messages from various national institutions, including trade unions, charitable societies like *Ina'ash al-Usrah* (The Family Rehabilitation Society), and the Arab Lawyers Committee.

The GCGST was established in 1980 following the famous two-and-a-half month strike. The strike ended with very little gained.

Exchange Has Broader Implications for Future

News Analysis by Hanna Siniora

The 'latest prisoner exchange, particularly the release of about 600 Palestinian prisoners in the occupied territories, created a mood of euphoria among the families of Palestinian prisoners. Among Israelis, the mood is mixed between happiness and hysteria — happiness at the return of three Israeli soldiers, but hysteria about the dangerous precedent set by the release of over 1100 Palestinian prisoners. Yet there are other, more important precedents and implications that this unique exchange has achieved — implications for the broader political constellation — which should not be overlooked.

The exchange represents a negotiated Palestinian agreement, one which was even signed and respected by two "hardliners" — Yitzhak Rabin and Ahmed Jibril. If these two could sign and execute an agreement of such consequence, there is greater basis for belief that Israelis and Palestinians, might one day be able to reach a negotiated settlement.

It is likely that a similar exchange will be concluded in the future with Fatah for the return of the bodies of Israeli soldiers who fell in action during the 1982 war. These moves strengthen the trend towards resolution of the longstanding conflict between the two peoples by dialogue and diplomacy.

Palestinians in the occupied territories are feeling the tension and anger that the exchange has triggered among Israelis. Several provocative incidents have already taken place. Former Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, who was instrumental with the Austrian Ambassador Herbert Emery in concluding the prisoner exchange, has wisely postponed his planned visit to Israel and the occupied territories for fear of a nasty reception from Israeli extremists. Yet despite all the tension, the fact remains that the exchange was executed without a hitch, and the agreement was meticulously obeyed by both sides. Again, this bodes well for the future.

After the tension has cooled down, perhaps these important implications of the prisoner exchange will be more readily grasped. One might foresee better chances of success for the formulation that came out of the 17th PNC. And certainly, the exchange should give King Hussein's visit to Washington a boost, in that it demonstrates that even the bitterest of enemies can come to terms with one another.

On the human level, both Palestinians and Israelis have received the message that humanitarian needs can be addressed, and that the leadership on both sides responded to pressure from families of prisoners. Most certainly both the Palestinian and Israeli man in the street will hope this step can encourage bolder political initiatives between the two peoples.

Muslims Celebrate Ramadan

Devout Muslims worldwide stopped eating and drinking during daylight hours on May 20, the first day of Ramadan, the month of the fast.

According to Islamic creed, fasting during Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. Muslims do not consume anything at all from sunrise until after sunset. The other four pillars of Islam are: belief in one God, the *haj*, or pilgrimage to Mecca, giving alms to the poor, and performing prayer rituals five times daily.

Sheikh Ekrema Sabri, head of the Spiritual Guidance Committee for West Bank Mosques, said: "Muslims welcome the month of fasting and suffering from hunger and thirst to worship God. Fasting makes us think of the poor, learn patience and strengthen our will."

Devout Muslims who are sick or travelling are exempt from fasting, as are pregnant and nursing women. Instead of fasting during Ramadan, they have to fast at other times or pay a sacrifice contribution to a poor person equivalent to the cost of a day's food for every fast day missed. Muslims who eat or drink during Ramadan for no legimate reason are supposed to feed 60 poor people for each fast day missed.

Jordanian laws, which are still in effect in the West Bank, allow local police to arrest individuals caught eating, drinking or smoking in public. This law is only enforced in predominently Muslim towns like Hebron, Tulkarm and Jenin.

Sheikh Sabri advised everyone to respect the sacredness of Ramadan. "Those who are not fasting are urged to respect fasting believers and not to eat, drink or smoke in public," he said.

Muslims prepare special food and sweets for the Ramadan season to eat as soon as the sun sets. The most popular local sweet is called *Ataief* which is a pancake stuffed with nuts or cheese and doused in syrup.

Curfew Clamped on Halhoul

A 24-hour curfew was clamped on the town of Halhoul in the Hebron district by the Israeli army May 14 after an Israeli bus was fired upon.

A number of residents of Halhoul and nearby Sa'ir were detained for questioning.

The Israeli bus company Egged announced that the Jerusalem-Kiryat Arba bus route has become the most high-risk route that Egged buses travel. A company spokesperson told *The Jerusalem Post* that Egged buses have been attacked about 10 times there in the past two or three years.

The Israeli daily *Hadashot* quoted army sources as saying that the attack was initiated by a new group operating in the Hebron district. The military analysts based their conjecture on the style of the attacks and the weapons used. (Translation: Al Mithaq, May 17).

Police Wound 5 in Gaza Shoot-Out

Five Gaza residents received gunshot wounds May 19 when Israeli soldiers tried to shoot down a driver fleeing in a stolen car at the Gaza-Israel intersection.

The shooting occurred when a stolen autobianchi driven by Lod resident Shaker Mohammed Dasouki, 24, approached the Erez intersection and sped away Border patrol guards at the roadblock started shooting. They hit a Peugeot carrying five Gazan labourers on their way to work in Israel. The car was badly damaged and all five passengers were hurt. The guards were reportedly unsuccessful in their attempt to stop the stolen car by gunfire at the intersection. The car was stopped only after a chase. Dasouki was admitted to the Shifa hospital in Gaza in critical condition with gunshot wounds in his back and shoulders. Others injured as a result of the shooting spree are: Farid Raqab, 24, in the stomach and left arm; Samih Sloul, 23, in the eye and neck; Nahed Abu Shared, 19, in the left arm; Khaled Hamdan Najjar, 20, light burns on his back; and Talal Hamarneh, 37, in the right arm.

Medical sources at Shifa hospital told *Al Fajr* that the condition of the injured was stable and that Dasouki had overcome his initially critical condition. A spokesperson for the Gaza police claimed that the shooting was necessary because the stolen car had sped away. He refused to say whether the police will compensate those who were injured as a result of the shooting.

Israeli newspapers had earlier reported that the army was ordered to be on full alert that same day, Israel's "Jerusalem Day", in case of suicide attacks.

AL FAJR STAFF

Congratulate

Samaan and Anita on the occasion of the birth of their daughter

Jumana

May 9, 1985

In Wake of Prisoner Exchange

Israeli Officials, Settlers Demand Clemency for Underground ,Hanging for Commandos

The prisoner exchange negotiated between the government of Israel and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, was revealed to the Israeli public on Monday May 20 after a lengthy news blackout. No sooner were the details of the agreement made public, than deputy Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir launched a campaign for the release of the members of the Gush Emunim terrorist underground (now on trial at the Jerusalem District Court) in an attempt to offset both the shock and the charges of the members of the different right-wing parties that "Israel had allowed itself to be blackmailed by the terrorists."

Prime Minister Peres and the other Labour Party ministers tried to sever any connection between the prisoner exchange and the "Jewish underground." At the same time, the conditions of the agreement — obviously humiliating to Israel — demanded an explanation. Peres told the press that the government had taken the decision for "humanitarian reasons. We saw how the families of the prisoners were suffering," he said, "and we decided to pay the price demanded [by Jibril]." The left-wing of the Labour Party, Mapam, and the Citizens' Rights Movement all applauded Peres for deciding to go ahead with the exchange, in spite of the "heavy price we had to pay."

Although the Likud ministers in the inner cabinet voted to go ahead with the exchange, the Likud MKs launched an attack on the government and the conditions of the exchange in order to create an atmosphere conducive to the campaign of the right-wing and religious parties for the release of the members of the Jewish underground. Shamir announced his intention to work for a presidential pardon on the same day the news blackout on the exchange was lifted, linking the two issues. According to a report in *HaAretz* (May 21), the supporters of the underground had been kept informed about the prisoner negotiations by "their friends in the government" and had been planning the campaign on behalf of the underground defendants for weeks in advance.

On Monday May 20, the wives of the defendants camped out in front of the Knesset and began a hunger strike. A demonstration was held in the middle of Jerusalem by "The Land of Israel Now" on behalf of the underground members during which Likud MKs said that the "the Jewish people had been humiliated by the release of the terrorists" and that to redress the travesty, the members of the Jewish underground should be immediately released. Hundreds of Kiryat Arba settlers demonstrated in the heart of Hebron against the release of the Palestinian prisoners, firing in the air to scare the local residents. MK Geula Cohen (Tehiya), speaking in the Knesset, called the exchange "a disgrace" and demanded that the underground trial be halted immediately and the defendants released.

Within 24 hours of the prisoner exchange, the release of the underground members had replaced the exchange as the issue of the day, in spite of the fact that the case is in *sub judice*. May 22, Ariel Sharon called for the release of "the so-called underground" so as not "to allow other undergrounds — of the right and the left — to sprout up." Sharon said that it "was inconceivable that the underground detainees should remain under lock and key after the release of murderers."

On Thursday May 23, President Haim Herzog announced that he would not begin to consider the question of a pardon until the trial had been completed.

On May 22, Minister Moshe Arens (Likud) called for instituting the death penalty for Palestinian "terrorists" found guilty of murder. According to a report in *HaAretz* (May 23) half of the government is in favour of capital punishment. Prime Minister Peres and the majority of the labour ministers (including Defence Minister Rabin) are opposed to the idea of capital punishment, but the Likud ministers seem to be unanimously in favour, reasoning that "if the terrorists had been put to death for their crimes, Israel would not have been blackmailed."

The settlers on the West Bank began a campaign of harassment directed at the released prisoners. According to reports in *HaAretz* and *Al Hamishmar*, the Tekoa settlers descended on the village of Za'atrah on the night of May 20, smashing windows and honking their horns. They "visited" the *mukhtar* of the village and demanded that the released prisoners be forced to leave the country.

Ziad Abu Ain of Ramallah, who was released in the exchange, was threatened by a West Bank Jewish settler, Haim Mark, who was injured in the 1979 bomb blast Abu Ain was accused of perpetrating. "He had better keep going right across the Jordan River," Mark told a *Jerusalem Post* correspondent. "If he stops in Ramallah, he's a dead man."

Jewish settlers demonstrating in Hebron.

According to a report in *Ha'Aretz* (May 23), the settlers have begun gathering information about the released prisoners — photographs, addresses, biographies, places of residence, movements, and information about the crimes they were charged with. According to *HaAretz* reporter Yehuda Litani, "there is a debate going on at present among the settlers over what type of action to take in the coming weeks." On Tuesday night, May 21, approximately 50 cars from the West Bank settlements of Karnei-Shomron, Emanuel, and Ginot, drove through the streets of Qalqilya honking their horns.

At a press conference held on Tuesday May 21, Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin told military correspondents that if "the terrorists...try to kidnap Israeli soldiers in order to negotiate the release of more murderers — we will arrest all those we released in the territories under our control."

The three Israelis charged with killing Tutinji.

3 Israelis Arrested for Tutunji Murder

Three Israelis — a soldier, a policeman, and a student — were remanded into police custody for 15 days May 19 after they confessed to last month's murder of a Palestinian taxi driver in Jerusalem. Police have the name of a fourth suspect but are withholding it for fear it will jeopardise their investigation.

Khamis Tutunji, 32, from Shu'fat neighbourhood — a Jerusalem suburb — was shot dead in his cab near the Ma'ale Adumim settlement on the Jerusalem-Jericho road April 23. The murder was widely interpreted at the time as a response to the murder of a Jewish taxi driver in the same area the previous day. According to Israeli press reports, the suspects in Tutanji's murder had plotted to carry out attacks against Palestinian residents even before David Caspi, the Jewish taxi driver, was killed.

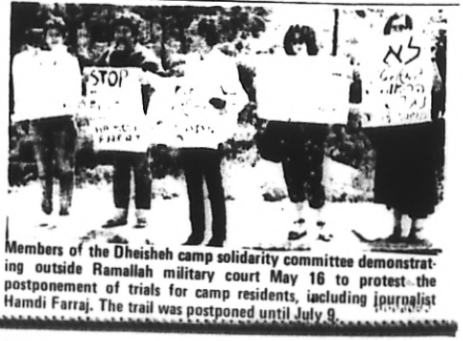
The three suspects confessed to Tutunji's murder and re-enacted their crime for police. They were identified as Gil Fuchs, 20, a soldier; Daniel Eizenmann, 26, a policeman and a resident of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement and Michael Hillel, 24, a literature student at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The fourth suspect's identity remains unknown.

Israeli police reports said that the gang was well-organised. *The Jerusalem Post* quoted sources involved in the investigation as saying that Eizenmann, a police mechanic who was recently selected for training as a bomb squad assistant, drove the getaway car, while the other two suspects travelled as passengers in Tutunji's taxi from Jerusalem on the Jericho road towards Ma'ale Adumim. Police said Eizenmann was the one who pumped three bullets into Tutunji's head and killed him. An Israeli army M-16 assault gun, which had been issued to the soldier, Fuchs, served as the weapon in the killing, police said.

When Eizenmann and Hillel were brought before the court for remanding on May 19, their lawyers claimed that their clients were mentally disturbed and that they were seeing psychiatrists. Eizenmann's lawyer termed his client "deeply disturbed" and claimed he had presented himself to the other two suspects as a general security services agent "acting on orders to put together an asssassination team to counter Arab terror," *The Jerusalem Post* reported. The suspects were not known to have corroborated this version of events. Many previous cases involving attacks against Arab residents and institutions ended in very light sentences or the release of suspects after they "demonstrated" that they were mentally unstable.

Tutunji's relatives declined to comment on the arrest. A member of the murdered taxi driver's family said only that he prefers not to say anything, and to "leave everything to the government."

Israeli police issued charge sheets against the three Arab youngsters suspected in the killing of the Jewish taxi driver, David Caspi, on April 19. Two of them are minors. The charge sheets explicitly stated that robbery was the motive behind the killing. In the aftermath of the incident, police and press alike had labelled it a "terrorist" action committed for "nationalist" motives.



Members of the Dheisheh camp solidarity committee demonstrating outside Ramallah military court May 16 to protest the postponement of trials for camp residents, including journalist Hamdi Farraj. The trail was postponed until July 9.

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Hands off Palestinian Camps

The Palestinian camps in south Lebanon and around Beirut are now facing a concerted attack from the Amal militias on a scale they have not experienced since the Sabra and Shatila massacres in 1982. These camps have been living under nightmarish conditions of insecurity and vulnerability since the Israeli invasion of 1982. Responsibility for these conditions lies squarely on the shoulders of Israel, the US, and Syria.

PLO Chairman Arafat ratified a ceasefire with Israel through third parties in June 1981 and subsequently honoured it until Israel's invasion of Lebanon in June 1982. The ceasefire was concluded primarily as a signal to Israel and the US that the PLO intended to explore political avenues for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in order to end continual air raids on Palestinian refugee camps. This was the very signal that Israel was anxious to obliterate when it invaded Lebanon in June 1982.

The Israeli war in Lebanon wreaked immense destruction in the Palestinian refugee camps all the way to Beirut. It resulted in very high casualties, massive detentions, widespread displacement, and major massacres like Sabra and Shatila.

The US promise to guarantee security in the camps after the withdrawal of PLO fighters was flagrantly violated and subsequently forgotten.

Likewise, the abrupt withdrawal the Israeli army is now in the process of completing has left in its wake a political and military vaccuum in Lebanon, bringing yet more insecurity, migration, and slaughter in the Palestinian camps. Former Lebanese allies like the Shi'ite Amal Movement and the Druze have started a campaign of terror to force the evacuation of the repeatedly displaced Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The Phalange, age-old enemies, have pitched in their share as well. Palestinians living in Lebanon at the moment are victims of attack from all sides and they have nowhere to turn for protection. Hundreds have been killed and wounded.

This time, Syria is the dominant power in Lebanon, a role Hafez al-Assad has gone to great lengths to secure. As such, he bears direct responsibility for this renewed slaughter. Palestinians point to the Syrian regime of Hafez al-Assad and lay the responsibility at his door.

The Palestinians are fighting for the right to protect themselves. They do not want any 'guardians' to do the job for them; they have been betrayed by so-called allies too many times in the past. The only real solution to the problems of these beleaguered Palestinians is repatriation to their homeland. As this does not seem to lie in the immediate future, the Palestinians in Lebanon must be allowed to protect themselves in whatever way they see fit. In the meantime, Hafez al-Assad is responsible for all incidents that befall the Palestinians in Lebanon.

News Analysis

POW Exchange Set Precedents

by Daoud Kuttab

The prisoner exchange between the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and the government of Israel May 20 set several important precedents and provided a rare occasion for celebration among Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

Although the latest prisoner swap is not the first that Israel has agreed to, it has certainly altered a number of previously fixed Israeli positions. The mere agreement on and execution of the exchange proved that Israel's previous stubborn refusal to release Palestinian prisoners no longer prevails. This doesn't mean that Israel will give in to Palestinian demands in the future, but it does mean that the previously unshakeable 'no' has been weakened. The door was left open for future exchanges by Israel's Defence Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, who said that this exchange took place "only because there was no military option to free them [the Israeli POWs]." This means in effect that whenever an Israeli soldier or civilian is held for ransom within Israel or within reach of its military, the Israelis will not negotiate any deals. But when Israeli prisoners are held on Arab territory and out of reach of the Israeli army, navy or air force, then an exchange might be possible.

The May 20 prisoner exchange also made major political waves in Israel because Palestinian negotiators insisted that the released Palestinians be given a choice to stay home if they wished. Although it is very tempting for them to leave the area altogether and seek safe havens, the majority of Palestinian prisoners chose to stay home. The presence of such a large number of Palestinian prisoners in the occupied territories and Israel was a major concession that the Israeli Defence Ministry had to swallow. Letting Palestinian prisoners remain among their people and recognising their presence by giving them their identification papers must have been tough for the Israelis considering their not so-concealed desire to rid the area of its indigenous residents so they can have the land without the people.

Israel's unwillingness to allow Palestinians to remain on their land is equally matched by Palestinian persistence to stay. The Palestinians' attachment to their land is reflected in the fact that most prisoners chose not to leave, with full awareness that they will be under close Israeli supervision, will most likely be arrested again and will be targets of revenge from settler extremists and victims of Palestinian operations. The choice to stay clearly demonstrates a patriotic Palestinian commitment despite the economic hardship and scarcity of employment that they would not face elsewhere.

Israel has never recognised Palestinian prisoners as Prisoners of War and has never conceded that the Geneva conventions on POWs apply to Palestinians. Although Israel will continue to deny Palestinian prisoners this status even after the exchange, the fact that it took place has *de facto* accorded such recognition. When the Israelis invaded Lebanon in 1982, they launched a war against the Palestinians and the PLO. Palestinians feel that their war with Israel has continued since even before 1948. And Palestinians feel that those who carry out military operations in the on-going war are not the 'terrorists' Israel tries so hard to portray but soldiers defending their people. The prisoner exchange marks a major step on the road to Israeli recognition of the Palestinians as a people with legitimate rights, something the Israelis fear most and use every means at their disposal to fight tooth and nail.

The prisoner exchange which freed over 1100 Palestinian prisoners triggered sharp disputes among Israelis. Some termed the price "too high." Settler leaders exploited the opportunity and began to clamour that if so many 'terrorists' could be released, the members of the Jewish terror underground currently being tried for violent anti-Arab attacks must be given clemency. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir jumped on the bandwagon and took up the settlers' battle cry, outdoing even Menachem Begin himself. For a moment, even the government coalition seemed threatened.

The linkage of the settler underground to the prisoner exchange marks a sharp shift in Israeli politics. The two groups bear no relationship to one another. The Palestinians were traded for three Israeli soldiers and that completed the exchange. The possibility that politicians might intervene in the Israeli judicial system to secure clemency for Jews who clearly broke the law has aroused fears among some Israelis who fear a complete breakdown of law and order if the government starts giving amnesty to people before they are even tried and convicted.

In contrast to the internal Israeli dispute, the political map in the occupied territories will not change as a result of the prisoner swap. A

Freed Viola Sa'ti with family:
The moral uplift of freedom is immeasurable.

number of political analysts have erroneously predicted that the prisoner exchange would strengthen anti-Arafat supporters in the occupied territories. Palestinians here who are grateful for the Ahmad Jibril-sponsored deal realise that politically the weight of the various camps will not change much. Ahmad Jibril's General Command faction has very little support in the occupied territories. The release of a few hundred prisoners does not change that. Even among those released none who stayed in the occupied territories actually identify with Jibril's group. In fact the vast majority of those released are close to the mainstream Fatah, and others in smaller percentages are close to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Fewer yet belong to the Democratic Front. Omar Qassem, a leading DFLP prisoner, was not released. Knowledgeable sources feel that the Israelis are holding him in order to exchange him for Samir Assad who is held by the DFLP.

The prisoner exchange has set a number of precedents and has complicated the political situation in Israel. But the most important aspect of the exchange is that Palestinians who had once been sentenced to long prison terms were set free. The moral uplift of freedom to the prisoner, his family, and the Palestinian people is immeasurable.

OPINION

AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

How Long Will the US Dish Out Aid to Israel?

by Jonathan Kuttab

I speak from the perspective of those in the US, in Israel, and among Palestinians who actively seek peace and justice, advocate human rights, and would like to see US aid and assistance become a constructive force leading to moderation, reconciliation, justice and peace in the Middle East. At the same time, I realise that governmental foreign aid is a limited resource that must be carefully distributed in accordance with well-defined priorities; that it must be properly accounted for, and that it is an instrument of policy which needs to accommodate US interests while meeting the needs of others throughout the world.

Israel is attempting to pursue, in the occupied territories, policies of annexation and expansion contrary to international law, United Nations resolutions and to the vision of the US concerning the ultimate disposition of those territories.

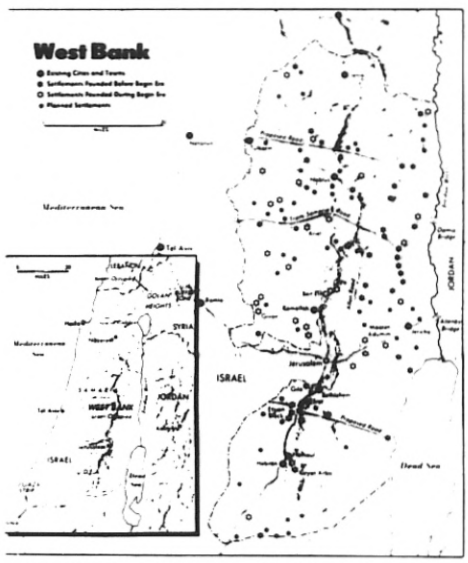
A classic *de facto* apartheid system has been created, with two separate and differing structures, courts, residences and rights — one for Palestinian Arabs and another for Israeli Jews.

Israel Channels US Funds to Settlements. . .

It is clear to me that the US actually pays for the establishment of the Jewish settlements whose construction and upkeep is beyond the capacity of a country like Israel. Over US$3 billion have been invested in these settlements which only serve 30-40,000 settlers. An additional US$800 million is spent on them every year. Were these settlements to be dismantled, as happened in Yamit, in the context of a peace treaty, the US is likely to be asked to foot the bill and compensate Israel for their loss. Israeli authorities occasionally deny this, and claim that US money is not spent for settlements in the occupied territories. Since Israel is exempted from specifically reporting how it spends most of its grant and loan monies, it is difficult to establish my above mentioned contention and show how specific US funds are spent on the settlements in the occupied territories. However it is possible to see this in rare cases where money is specifically earmarked, as in the case of US$15 million for the Migration and Refugee Assistance account for resettling Ethiopian and other Jews in Israel (US$2,500,000 for Ethiopian Jews). The terms of that appropriation were violated as Ethiopian Jews were settled in Kiryat Arba, the controversial settlement near Hebron in the West Bank.

... And Takes From Funds Earmarked for Palestinians

Palestinians in the West Bank have also in the past been recipients of US AID money channeled through six US voluntary agencies. About US$5 million a year has been earmarked for projects of such agencies. Yet these agencies have faced major difficulties in carrying out their projects, which under AID regulations require the prior approval of the Israeli military authorities. These authorities have used that power of approval to undermine and obstruct the whole programme and subvert its American aims and divert its funds, however meagre, to serve their own ends in the West Bank, which were at variance with the aims of the US government.



A map shows the settlements in the occupied territories.

An independent Israeli researcher, Meron Benvenisti, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, did a thorough analysis of US AID-funded projects in the West Bank. He analysed the expenditure of US$36 million in grants provided by AID to voluntary agencies for West Bank and Gaza projects from 1977-1983. He asserted that the entire thrust of the aid effort, as approved by the United States, had been changed by the Israeli authorities through their power to give or withhold permission for specific projects. For example, Israel has approved only 35.6 percent of the agricultural and 23.1 percent of the industrial expenditures endorsed by the United States, local Palestinian Arabs and the voluntary agencies. "The Israeli authorities turn down almost all projects that involve purchasing of tractors, bulldozers or any other earth-moving equipment," Benvenisti wrote.

> This policy may be attributed to an attempt to prevent Palestinians from reclaiming rough or stony ground otherwise claimed by the Israeli authorities as "state land" being "uncultivable."

"Only 15.3 percent of dairies, hatcheries and other agricultural processing establishments are approved," he said.

By contrast, Benvenisti found, the authorities approve most public works projects that would otherwise probably come out of Israeli government funds. Approval has been given to 91.1 percent of the electricity projects 88.4 percent of the water and sewage projects and 80.6 percent of the road projects submitted. As David Shipler wrote in the *International Herald Tribune* on April 7, 1984, "The emphasis on consumption-oriented public works projects reduces the budgetary burden on the Israeli government. US funds, channeled into public works in the territories, could thereby release Israeli budgets for Jewish settlements."

The stated goal of US funding for these projects is to assist Palestinian economic development on the West Bank and to improve the "quality of life" in the words of the Secretary of State, George Shultz. This runs counter to Israeli designs, which aim at exercising sovereignty over what it calls Judea and Samaria, and at gradually incorporating these areas into the Jewish state. That policy, which is inconsistent with international law, with US interests, and even with the Camp David Accords, requires that Palestinians be prevented from creating or developing autonomous sectors, institutions or infrastructure. Instead, they must be in Israel's view, brought into total dependence and reliance on Israel. As a result, US sponsored programmes in agricultural and industrial sectors are rarely approved.

Palestinians in the West Bank can make great progress towards improving the quality of their lives without requiring large amounts of US aid. If the United States government can use its good offices merely to obtain Israeli licenses and permits for solid development projects — a bank, a cement factory, a marketing cooperative land reclamation equipment, and the opportunity to help themselves in their own land.

On the other hand, the aid that is given to Israel, when viewed on a per capita basis, exceeds by far aid that is given to any other country. In Fiscal Year 1983, aid amounted to US$621 for every Israeli man, woman and child. The closest country after that was Oman with US$61, then Egypt with US$58. The Lebanese received US$7 per capita and US$7 was allocated for each West Banker, subject to the restrictions described above.

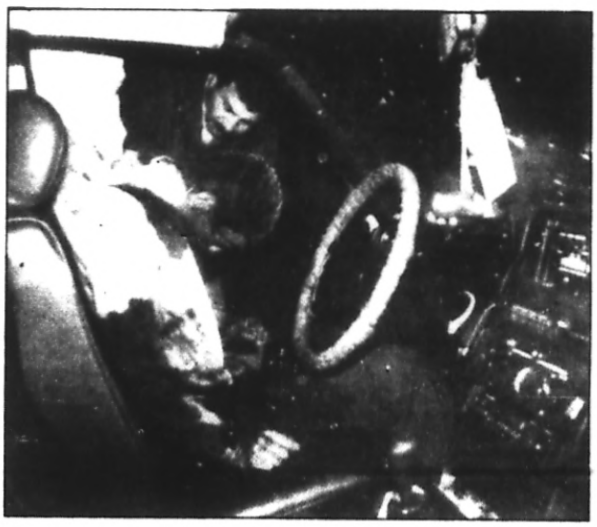
Since that time, the figures have been rising steadily. The Administration is asking for US$1.8 billion in military credits for Fiscal Year 1986, which will not be repaid; at least US$1.2 billion in economic assistance — all of which are grants; in addition to a special request for two years emergency economic assistance. The portion for this year is US$800 million. Furthermore, the US is being asked to forgive debt repayments for past military and economic loans which reached over US$1 billion last year. This adds up to a package of direct aid of US$5 billion dollars.

It is apparently unquestioned that the US taxpayer will continue to pay greater and greater amounts while Israel fails to take serious corrective measures to reduce its expenditures and bring its economy under control. At a time when US government agencies offering vital services to Americans are facing serious cuts; when farmers, students, the elderly, and the schools have to tighten their belts, Israel continues to print its money freely. More money was printed during the three month wage price freeze than any previous three month period — approximately US$800 million dollars. The apparent taboo against "pressuring Israel," in the context of massive and apparently limitless military, economic and diplomatic support, does in fact influence Israel in many ways injurious both to the US and to Israel itself. It removes all incentives for internal reform and serious dealing with economic problems; it removes all possibility for Israelis to assess their situation *vis-a-vis* their Arab neighbours realistically; it undermines Israelis who call for moderation by their own government and who argue for the kind of concessions that must be made to achieve peace. Given the US *carte blanche*, Israel is lulled into total reliance on the United States and into a false security. ■

Jonathan Kuttab is a Palestinian lawyer who lives in Jerusalem and co-directs Law in the Service of Man, *the West Bank affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists. This piece was excerpted from a statement he made to the Foreign Affairs Commitee of the US House of Representatives on behalf of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign. March 7, 1985.*

Ran Kislev of the Hebrew daily *Ha'Aretz* argues that the murder of an Arab taxi driver April 23 portends the re-emergence of the Jewish terrorist underground. Three suspects — a soldier, a policeman, and a student — have since been arrested for the murder.

Jewish Terrorism Rears Its Ugly Head Again



Tutunji, 32, was found dead in his taxi on the Jerusalem-Ma'ale Adumim highway. He was shot three times in the head.

A week after the murder of the Arab taxi driver [Khamis Tutunji, shot dead on April 23] the motive for the crime and the distinguishing characteristics of the murderers do not seem to be in doubt. At the time of this writing the murderers are still at large, and there is reason to assume that given the prevailing conditions, a lot of time will pass before they are apprehended. But the evidence already points to certain conclusions. The Arab taxi driver was murdered in response to the murder of the Jewish taxi driver [David Caspi, murdered on April 19]; the *modus operandi* of the second murder is almost identical to that of the first; (the suspects in the first case have, of course, been arrested, ruling out any grounds for suspecting them of being involved in the second murder). Hence, it appears that the murderers of the Arab taxi driver deliberately imitated the *modus operandi* of the first murder. The murders took place three days apart; the Arab taxi driver was murdered on the road to Ma'aleh Adumim; the murder weapon was of Israeli army issue; it appears that the murderers asked their victim for his ID papers to make sure he was an Arab; the murder was well-planned and a large group of people was involved.

From the facts known at present, one is driven to the unavoidable suspicion that Jewish terrorism has once again reared its ugly head. And indeed, why shouldn't it?

When the details of the Gush Emunim underground's activities were revealed last year, the public went into shock. Even the settlers and the members of Gush Emunim — the "fringe" of the underground" of the terrorists — were deeply disturbed by the revelations about the underground. The affair precipitated a fissure among the leaders of Gush Emunim and almost wiped the movement off the political map.

But within a short period of time, the atmosphere changed. A large number of politicians — including past and present cabinet members — identified with the "nationalist camp," began to condone, sympathise with, and even openly support the terrorists. The members of the underground, the same men who had planned and executed terrorist acts, began to be referred to as "fine young men who made a mistake." They might have been censured, but their actions were held to be understandable and their objectives were even accorded sympathy. They were not seen as criminals, but rather as fervent patriots whose only crime was their hastiness, which made them "take the law into their own hands."

And the affair did not end with declarations of condonement. The Gush Emunim underground detainees received special rights in prison. They were held in a special wing of the Tel Mond prison, set up for their exclusive use. This was done in spite of the overcrowding in the prisons, especially among young convicts. The detainees were also allowed visits from relatives and friends which, more than once turned into festive "happenings." They were granted prison leave during religious holidays and for family celebrations. Young offenders — the bulk of the Tel Mond prison population, charged with far less serious crimes — would never dream of the prison conditions enjoyed by the underground members, given the conditions in Israeli prisons and lock-ups. All this was done through the agency of the state, the prison system being under the authority of the Ministry of Police. But the Ministry of Justice did not default in doing its share either. Before the trials had even begun, the defendants and their lawyers began plea-bargaining their way to reduced sentences. It is hard to believe that all the deals were predicated on the circumstances surrounding the case (eg, lack of incriminating evidence). It's more likely that it is part and parcel of the campaign being waged on behalf of the terrorists by their advocates in the Knesset. It affected the defendants' prison conditions, and ultimately influenced the trial itself.

Hence the astonishingly light sentences meted out thus far. When one of the defendants was recently sentenced to three years in prison, many termed the sentence "excessively severe." Supposedly, it may indeed be "severe" for a "fine young man" who "took the law into his own hands" — but is a three-year prison term really severe for a convicted terrorist whose actions and whose organisation's crimes include blowing off the legs of other human beings and murdering people?

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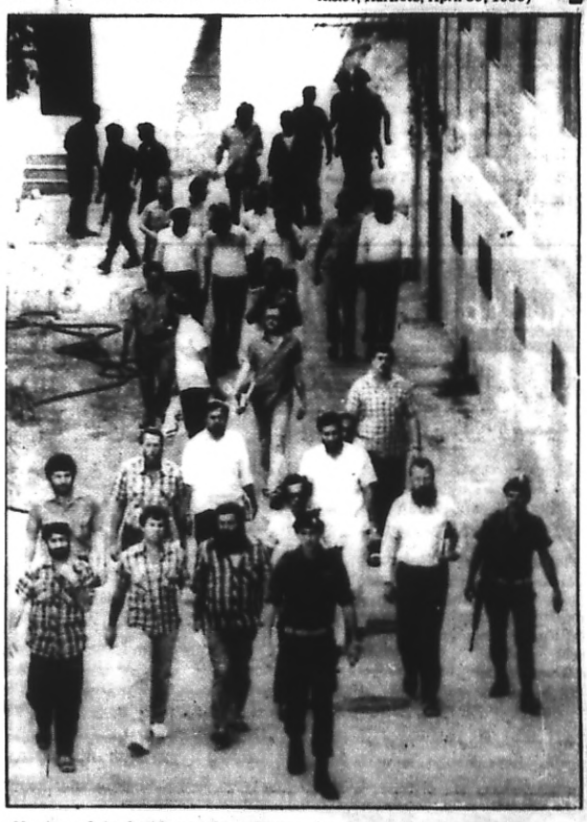
It seems that many of us have lost all sense of proportion. Today, whoever dares to speak in favour of applying the same law to Jewish terrorists and Arab terrorists is considered a "know-nothing liberal" at best, but more often an "enemy of the Jewish people" and a PLO supporter. There are many people — and they are not confined to the extreme nationalist camp — who want to avenge the victims of the Arab terrorists, and while not condoning counter-terrorism, believe that it "can be understood."

They even fail to take cognizance of the pragmatic aspects of the issue. For Jewish terrorists do not directly avenge the crimes of Arab terrorists — the legal process and the state have an exclusive prerogative in that regard. Jewish terrorists, like Arab terrorists, attack innocent people. The murder of the Arab taxi driver for example, only served to further agitate the Arabs of the occupied territories, bolstering support for Arab terrorism. In the final analysis, Jewish terrorists *help* Arab terrorists much more than they hinder them.

In an enlightened society, the legal process and the prison system exist to serve as deterrents to crime. But everything that has been done up to now in regard to the Gush Emunin terrorist organisation points to the fact that the rules of deterrence are not being applied. Prevailing attitudes to the underground are doing more to encourage similar acts in the future than to prevent them. The West Bank settlers — out of whose ranks the terrorist organisation sprouted up — are once again complaining about the infirmity of the security network in the occupied territories and are threatening to take the law into their own hands. Those who do so — no matter how fanatic they turn out to be — will not be considered criminals, but "fine young men" who are perhaps a bit too impetuous, but worthy of our admiration and understanding all the same.

Who is willing to wager that these "impetuous" young men are still *waiting* to strike? Everything argues in favour of the conclusion that they went into action last week, in a taxi on the road to Ma'aleh Adumim. (Translation: Ran Kislev, HaAretz, April 30, 1985) ■



Members of the Jewish terrorist underground on their way to the Jerusalem District Court.

Al Fajr begins this week a series of interviews with Arabs who are members of the Israeli Knesset. The interviews will be published in alphabetical order.

Arab Members of Knesset

by Kate Rouhana

Of the 120 members of the Israeli Knesset, 7 are Arabs. The Arab MK's belong to six different parties — some Zionist and some not — and hail from diverse backgrounds and parts of the country. Four are Muslim, two are Druze, and one is Christian, although religion seems to matter little to most of them. And their political views are by no means identical; in fact, they cover a surprisingly wide spectrum.

Al Fajr's Kate Rouhana interviewed the Arab MKs on a variety of issues, including their professional and political backgrounds, their constituencies, their status as Arabs within their respective parties, their parties past and future programmes for the Arabs in Israel, how they view the Palestinian problem and the relationship of the Arabs in Israel to it, what the ideal future status of the Arabs in Israel should be, and how they as MKs feel they can promote peace in the region. *Al Fajr* will run excerpts of these interviews in alphabetical order, in a weekly series.

The one point the Arabs in the Knesset agree on is that the Arabs in Israel face many special problems. Most frequently mentioned were confiscation of land, deficiencies in education, lack of development planning for Arab villages and consequent shortage of land for housing, discriminatory government budgeting (that allocates to Arab councils only 30 percent of the budget of their Jewish counterparts), and the non-existence of Arab industry.

Readers should keep in mind that in Israel, parties or political groupings draw up lists of candidates. The electorate votes for a party list *in toto*. The distribution of Knesset seats among lists is done according to the percent of the total national vote received — One percent qualifying a party to a seat in the Knesset. After the first seat, parties receive seats equivalent to their percentage of the national vote — for 25 percent of the votes, a party would get 25 percent or 30 seats. Members on the list receive seats according to their order on the election list, so one's position on the list is all-important. Each party has a different system for allocating list spots, and some have special procedures for choosing Arab members and determining their number on the list.

Arabs in Israel generally make a distinction between Zionist and non-Zionist parties and do not hold Arab MKs in Zionist parties in high regard. They feel that Zionist parties are inherently directed exclusively at serving the Jewish population at the expense of the Arab population. Hence the bulk of Arab votes in recent years have gone to Rakah, the Communist Party, which until 1984 was the only non-Zionist party on the map. In 1984 a new non-Zionist party, the Progressive List for Peace, emerged and drew a substantial percent of the Arab vote. The issue of integration vs. separation as a political strategy for the Arabs in Israel, frequently touched upon in these interviews, is rooted in this distinction.

The Arabs in Israel do not all necessarily look to these Knesset members as their political representatives. Some do; others vote for them but consider their true political representation to lie outside, in Palestinian national organisations; and others, notably those affiliated with the grassroots *'Abna al-Balad* (Sons of the Village) Movement, abstain from voting in elections on principle. They feel that the Israeli government, inherently Zionist, cannot possibly work on behalf of the Palestinian population in Israel and they believe that only a secular state can offer the Arabs true equality and representation. We have tried to give some indication of the support Arabs give to various parties by indicating the votes each received in the 1984 elections. But these figures do not tell the whole story as many Arabs cast their votes out of purely instrumental, not ideological motives.

In the July 23, 1984 elections, 199,968 valid Arab votes were cast, meaning that 72.2 percent of eligible Arab voters participated in the elections. The Arabs in Israel constitute around 17 percent of the population.

ATSHE:
"UNFORTUNATELY, THE ARABS ARE VERY EMOTIONAL, AND I DID NOT WIN THE ARAB VOTE."

Zidan Atshe
(SHINUI)

Born in 1940 in the village of Isfiya on Mount Carmel, Zidan Atshe finished elementary school in his village and went to a Christian boarding school in Nazareth. After high school he joined the Israeli army, as all Druze citizens do, and served for two-and-a-half years. In 1963 he was appointed to a training position for Arab youth attached to the Histadrut Labour Union, a position he held until 1969. From 1965-68, he worked on a BA in political science and Arab studies, and in 1971 he received an MA in political science from Hebrew University. While in Jerusalem, Atshe worked for Israel TV as a reporter on Arab affairs.

In 1971, Atshe was sent by the Israeli government to its Consulate in New York, where he served as Consul for Information and Head of Information Services for four years.

Atshe defines himself as "Druze by religion, Arab by nationality, and Israeli by citizenship."

He is now serving his second term as an MK; the first was from 1977-1981 with the DASH movement. His is third on the list of Shinui (Change), a small left-of-centre Zionist party that won only two seats when it first ran for elections in 1981. In 1984, Shinui won three seats, mostly from Israeli Jewish voters as Atshe explains below.

Shinui's platform for the 1984 elections states: "Even though the Jewish people have a natural and historic right to the Land of Israel, it is incumbent upon us, in view of the present historical circumstances, to agree to forego territories populated by Arabs in Judea, Samaria and Gaza." Shinui favours a Jordanian-Palestinian state in the territories to be relinquished, on the grounds that "a third state between us and Jordan will not be a stable solution to the Palestinian question." The platform advocates negotiations "with any Arab element that recognises the State of Israel" and welcomes "the initial manifestations of a shift in the attitude of a part of the Palestinians toward the existence of the state of Israel." The party calls for reciprocal moves on Israel's part, beginning with a freeze on settlements.

On his political background: "In the youth movement, my job was a political position affiliated to the Labour party. I found that labour was not reciprocating either the Druze or Arab community for their contribution to the party, and I decided to leave Labour and be free, on my own. It's unfortunate that I joined Herut (Likud) at the time, for six months, and then I concluded that it was not my party.

"Later, in 1976, when I came back from New York, Shinui was on its way to take part in the 1977 elections, and I did know Amnon Rubinstein [head of the Shinui list-ed]. I thought by then that any extremism, whether it be left or right, would be dangerous for the Israeli country, society and state. I thought that the best way to start tackling the responsibilities in our region is to join a moderate political movement and party. That's why I joined DASH at the time. But I was always counted on the Shinui wing of the DASH movement. I joined DASH in the beginning. But the election came immediately, six months after my enrollment in DASH, and then I struggled to be an MK. And I won my seat through the DASH party at the time (in 1977)..."

On his constituency: "The recent elections of 1984 have proven without any doubt that my real constituency is the Druze community. I have been giving my services to the general constituency in Israel, Jews and Arabs, but I concentrated on the struggle for the Arabs for the last eight years. Unfortunately, the Arabs are very emotional, and I did not win the Arab vote. When an Arabist political movement emerges, they spontaneously vote for that Arab party. However, I *still* consider myself as representing many Arab interests, but certainly I have recently been emphasising the Druze community — because of the political circumstances in Lebanon, and because the Druze community was neglected even *by me* between 1977 and 1981, when I concentrated my parliamentary efforts on Arab affairs."

On Shinui: "Let's put it in a nutshell. Equality and indiscrimination is identical to the Shinui party. Had I ever felt any discrimination, I certainly wouldn't continue another 24 hours with Shinui, because I'm considered one of the leaders of the party, one of the founders.

"But I'm not in the Knesset because of the Druze or the Arab vote. The Druze gave me 8000 votes and the Arabs 2500 — these do not send one member to the Knesset. So I am here because of Jewish confidence. We are trying to have equality as our main point. Because we do not see any other exit except to equalise everyone in Israel.

"Shinui approached the Arabs saying that the party doors are open for every Israeli, no matter what his ethnic and religious affiliation might be. We wanted the Arabs to understand that without a political framework, without a political organisation, which again couldn't be or shouldn't be extreme left or extreme right, many of the Arab problems would remain unresolved unfortunately. So we wanted the Arabs to enroll in the party in order to make a common party for the Arabs and the Jews together. Now, unfortunately, we have not had the opportunity to give substantial services to the Arab community in Israel. But we have contributed to stopping the land confiscation from 1977, when we came to the Knesset until 1983. We diminished the demolition of houses built without permits. I pressed in the Education Committee, and I think that every day we were talking about building new schools and classrooms. Because of my pressure, we formed the subcommittee on Arab Education in Israel for the first time in Israeli history. The Citizenship Law was not giving 27,000 Arabs immediate citizenship, because their parents left the state of Israel in 1948 during the war and they came back in 1949 after the census was taken. Amnon Rubenstein succeeded to make all those Arabs citizens by amending that law.

"We made the Israeli public aware and vigilant about the Arab problems in Israel. Unfortunately this community was completely neglected. The Arab moderate voice in the Knesset was absent throughout the last 27 years at the time, 36 years by now. They've either always spoken on behalf of Moscow, for Communist reasons, or the Arabs who were in the Knesset *here* attached to the Labour Party were servants of their parties and not necessarily representatives of the Arabs. They neglected Arab interests. They were almost quislings."

On Arab political activity in Israel: "I think that if the Arabs in Israel continue to exclude themselves from the existing political or socio-political frameworks, starting from student organisations in universities and on up to political parties, this exclusion will bring about total alienation between both communities. I have no doubt about it. This exclusion is very dangerous to the Arabs, more than to the Jews. But it's dangerous to both, in the end. If the Arabs will not mingle and enroll and struggle in the existing political parties. I see the end not promising at all. Because without the political bargaining power — the Arabs, again, are emotional. They are giving their votes either to Miari or to the Communist Party. They are spreading their voice and weakening their power. If you still find about 60,000 Arabs voting for *no* goal, the future is not promising. I'm saying that if the Arabs want to demonstrate their power and have their potential represented some-where — locally, regionally, or nationally — in the Knesset, they have to divide themselves between two parties only, not six or seven. And to be *part* of these parties, not just to vote for them because they are getting money in return for their votes. If any political party gives you money in return for your votes, they do not owe you anything for four years. That's what the existing political parties have done with the Arabs over the last 36 years.

"The problem of the Arabs is *emotions*. And emotions would continue to destory the real Arab potential, either in the parliament or in the government..."

On the West Bank and Gaza: I think the Camp David agreement, to me at least, was the most ideal proposal under the circumstances of that time, 1979, or even until today. Because we cannot create miracles. To create a Palestinian state is a miracle. To continue to control the Palestinians, on the Israeli side, is a catastrophe for Zionism and for the future relations between Israeli Jews and Arabs. We should withdraw substantially from the West Bank — but don't ask me from where, it's not my business, I'm only making an observation. And I think we have to cease to establish settlements in the West Bank. The Arabs in the West Bank have to live their life. They are to be given full autonomy. From the historical point of view, the future of any autonomy is either to develop itself into an independent entity or to reintegrate itself into the state from which it had taken the autonomy, in this case, Israel. Since I think that reintegration would be dangerous to the Arabs and dangerous to Israel, full autonomy might be developed in the future to a political entity which might include East Jerusalem within those borders.

"I don't want to specify whether I mean returning the territories to Jordan or having a federation, or whatever. I would prefer local Palestinian leadership to emerge that has the courage to negotiate with the Israelis the future of the territories. And not to wait, or to live under the gun of Arafat or others. Because no outsider can — even Khomeini was not able to accomplish the full revolution while he was in exile. Only the local indigenous population can lead the future of the territories *vis a vis* Israel. And I believe there is a great potential and capable Palestinian people in the West Bank to negotiate with Israel on the basis of Camp David. If the Palestinians would be realistic and adopt Camp David as a first step toward a final solution, I believe that would be the best way for them and for the state of Israel. If they would start and the start would be fruitless, they certainly can leave the negotiations. But they have to try!

"If a Palestinian state was established, I think that the Israeli Arabs would continue to be Israelis. No one, to my knowledge, even the most extremist and critical, has ever expressed a desire to join any Palestinian state in the future. If there would be any Palestinian entity, it would be for those Palestinians who left their homes and their land, or are still in their homes and on their land, but beyond the borders of Israel. Of the Israeli Arabs, nobody would give up or renounce his Israelism. We have even spoken many times about this possibility. What they're saying is, I'm a Palestinian struggling for the Palestinians, but I will not leave my home and my house..."

On his role in the peace process. "The Shinui Party has been trying to strengthen the moderate MKs in this house. That's why we joined the coalition with the Labour Party. We are trying to vote and to lobby for any possible way to bridge the gap between our neighbouring countries and the state of Israel. But unfortunately, we are doing it here and we don't have any encouragement from the other side. We don't have any Peace Now movement, for example, in the Arab states. Anyone who would voice these attitudes might be arrested.

"Extremism in Israel is mounting from both the Arab and the Jewish sides. And our joining the coalition, it's really and formally to encourage the moderate voices and attitudes in the Knesset."

Abd al Wahab Darawashe
(LABOUR)

Born in 1943, in Iksal village in the lower Galilee, Abd al-Wahab Darawshe studied at an Arab seminary for teachers in Tel Aviv-Jaffa and went on to Haifa University for his BA in Education and General History. He started his career as a teacher at a comprehensive school in Iksal, then became deputy headmaster and headmaster. Later he worked for the Ministry of Education as an inspector of Arab elementary and high schools in Israel.

Darawshe defines himself as "Palestinian by nationality and Israeli by citizenship, so I'm an Israeli Palestinian

DARAWSHEH:
"MY PARTY MADE MANY SERIOUS MISTAKES VIS A VIS ARABS IN THE PAST ... WE DON'T EVEN HAVE EQUALITY IN THE PARTY ITSELF."

or Palestinian Israeli or a Palestinian in Israel — you can say it all."

Currently serving his first term as an MK, Darawshe is no. 42 out of 44 in the Labour bloc. He's best known for his famous attempt to address the 17th Palestine National Council in Amman in November 1984, when he flew to Cyprus en route to Amman, but then aborted his attempt due to pressure from his Labour colleagues and Amman's delay in granting him a visa.

The Labour Party is a mainstream Zionist party usually termed "centre." In its platform for the 1984 elections, the Alignment position on the Palestinians and the occupied territories stipulated that Israel should never return to the borders of June 4, 1967, but that it would seek a solution to the Palestinian problem by concluding a peace treaty with Jordan based on territorial compromise. Alignment opposes "the establishment of another Palestinian state in the territory between Israel and Jordan, it being sufficient that a "Jordanian-Palestinian state" should encompass the densely populated areas of the West Bank and Gaza. The Alignment further stipulated that "certain areas, including the Jordan Valley with the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, Gush Etzion, the environs of Jerusalem, and the southern Gaza Strip will be included in the sovereign territory of Israel" in a settlement. The Alignment refuses to negotiate with "the PLO and any other organisations based on the Palestinain Covenant which deny the State of Israel's right to exist, and which reject the national character of the Jewish people or use terrorist methods." However, "authorized representatives of the Palestinian Arab residents of Judea, Samaria and Gaza would be acceptable partners "in negotiations conducted with Jordan." Labour received 26 percent of the Arab vote in 1984.

On his political background "My involvement in politics began 18 years ago when I was chosen as the representative of the teachers among the Alignment list in the Nazareth branch of the Teachers' Histadrut. I was chosen as a member — and even the *only* representative of the Arab teachers in the highest committee of teachers in Israel, the teachers' Histadrut. I was the first Arab to hold that post.

"Five years ago, in 1980, I was chosen by my friends in Nazareth and the surrounding area as the head of a committee on [Labour] party affairs. Then they chose me to be their representative in the Knesset, as their candidate. The party did not choose me directly. They let the Arab representatives in the party choose their candidates. The one who gets the most votes is appointed in the first place the party assigns to Arabs — no. 42. There were six candidates; every district sent one candidate. The representatives of the Arab members of Labour from the whole country chose the first candidate, the second, and so on. I was put in the first place. And this gave me some force, that I was elected by my people. I wasn't appointed by an official or anyone in the party. I am the only Arab representative in the Labour Party who was chosen in this Knesset. So I can say that I represent the 53,000 Arabs who voted for Labour. We have on other lists six Arab members of Knesset, because Amal Nasr ed-Din doesn't call himself an Arab and he is free to decide whatever he likes. The six Arabs in the Knesset are the real representatives of the Arabs in Israel."

On discrimination in the party: "I have a real struggle, a continuing struggle. I am not frustrated, but I cannot say that I am satisfied about everything. For instance, even though the Labour Party has 50% of this government, there is no Arab minister or deputy minister. I think this is a kind of discrimination because we are 17% of the population, but we haven't any representative in this government. So this government cannot say, 'we represent the whole nation, Arabs and Jews.' If a Jew can become prime minister in France, an Arab can't be a deputy minister in Israel? It's discrimination. I say it aloud in my party and in every place.

"I think two major problems must be solved so I will be satisfied. And they are connected. The first thing is equality inside, among citizens, Arabs and Jews; the second, which is the most important, is peace in the Middle East, a just peace in the Middle East. When I say peace, I think that we cannot have equal rights here, and we cannot give equal duties in the state without solving the Palestinian problem. Because from one side, we are Israeli citizens; from the other, we are Palestinians. So there is a real connection between equality and peace..."

On Labour's Past Performance: "I think my party made many serious mistakes *vis-a-vis* Arabs in the past. They expropriated land; they didn't give us equal rights. We don't even have equality in the party itself. We only have one (Arab) representative in the Knesset! I hope the party will have a chance to correct these mistakes during the coming years. This is the promise we got from the leaders of the party during elections. They said, 'We admit that there were mistakes in the past, and we will correct them.' I hope that they will have a chance to do so.

"I see that there are some gestures to improve our situation, but its not enough. I demand practical things, actual steps, not only gestures or admission.

"Abolishing the post of Advisor on Arab Affairs is a positive step. Removing all the Arab departments is a positive step, because all of them were an obstacle in front of the integration of Arabs into the state. All these departments in which the so-called "Arabists" worked, they tried to prevent any integration of Arabs into the state, because this is their job, to be the mediator. I think after 38 years we are old enough to express ourselves and act — we don't need mediators, these Arabists."

On Political Strategy for the Arabs in Israel: "I think that more integration with Jews in the state will be better for Arabs and Jews. As a minority, I don't think we can get better rights without integration with Jews, without an Arab-Jewish struggle, a common struggle. We cannot get a majority in the Knesset. We alone cannot convince the majority to accept our demands for equality. So I believe that any struggle in the state for equality must be a common Arab-Jewish struggle. I am in my party because I believe that this kind of struggle, the Arab-Jewish struggle, is the only kind which will get results. It's not enough to cry, to complain, and even to write...

"I support some autonomy in education, in the local councils, organisation of students, and so on. But they must be a part of the common organisations. I'm not satisfied with the way things are organised today. I don't support the Arab departments with the 'Arabists' who are Jewish administrators. I mean an Arab autonomy in other fields, for instance, in education, books, curriculum — I think it's our right to decide what to teach in our schools. It's more than a question of having an Arab minister. I demand that Arabs can become deputy ministers and heads of departments, because we are 17 percent and we have rights. But I don't mean we will get an Arab minister for Arab affairs. He can be a minister in common affairs. Like a Jew anywhere in the world can be a foreign minister, or whatever.

On identity and representation: "The Arabs in Israel are part of the Palestinian people, but we are different because we are Israeli citizens. The real difference is that Palestinians everywhere in the world can say that the PLO represents them, while we don't say the PLO represents us, because we elect and can be elected to the Knesset, and we are Israeli citizens, so the PLO doesn't represent us. While I see the PLO is the real representative, the legitimate repre-

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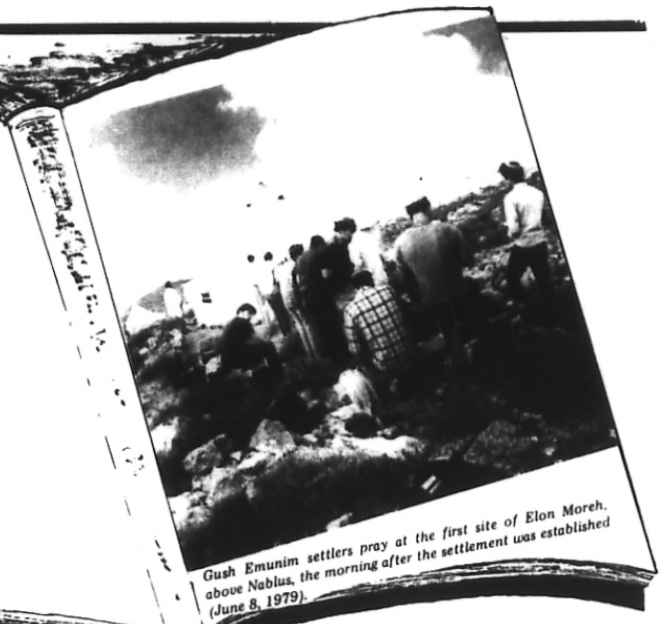
'Prescription For Conflict'



Gush Emunim settlers pray at the first site of Elon Moreh, above Nablus, the morning after the settlement was established (June 8, 1979).

Book Review by
Lesley AbuKhater

Prescription for Conflict: Israel's West Bank Settlement Policy

by Merle Thorpe Jr.,
Foundation for Middle East Peace
Washington DC, 1984. 182p.

"There is a basic schizophrenia in American Jewry. We hide behind the argument that it is not for us to speak our minds, because the Israelis have to pay the price but I think that is precisely why we have to speak out when we spot trouble — to save Jewish lives," says New York Rabbi Balfour Brickner, quoted in Merle Thorpe's recent book on Israel's disastrous settlement policy, *Prescription for Conflict* (p.138). Though saving Jewish lives (perhaps a bit overstated) is not the declared intention of Thorpe's book, it is true that his audience is precisely those American Jews afraid to speak their minds concerning the settlements for fear of what Thorpe calls being "out of the mainstream."

Prescription for Conflict is largely a selection of quotations aimed at discrediting Israel's settlement programme. Included in the book is a foreword by journalist Amnon Kapelink and an introduction by editor emeritus of *New Outlook* monthly, Simha Flapan. The text is divided into seven chapters and a conclusion, including: Background to the Conflict, UN Security Council Resolution 242, Israel's West Bank Settlement Policy, Conditions of West Bank Occupation, Israeli Opposition to the West Bank Settlements, American Jewish Opposition to the Settlements, and the United States and Israel's Settlement Policy. The text includes a 60-page middle section of West Bank photographs taken by Thorpe and accompanying Israeli quotations, as well as a series of relevant appendices.

In an interview with *Al Fajr*, Thorpe explained the purpose of the book thus: "The book was very simply an attempt to bring about some elemental facts, but more importantly to let them (American Jews-ed.) see how the Israelis are reacting to the settlements." The book was intended, he said, "to free them, to liberate them, to get them to discuss and talk about it and not let them feel like they were out of the mainstream." *Prescription for Conflict* is focused on the idea that Israel's settlement of Palestinian land on the West Bank has a devastating effect on any chance for peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Though admittedly only "the most elemental presentation of the facts and issues involved," Thorpe intended the book to help fill the gaps in American, particularly Jewish, knowledge about the situation in the occupied territories. Not only was he aware of this general lack of knowledge, he said, but also of a "great reluctance on the part of the American Jews to speak about it, to address it." They fear any negative comments, he said, would be construed in Jerusalem as being not supportive of Israel.

Many other, non-Jewish Americans also hesitate to criticise Israel's policy *vis-a-vis* the Palestinians because, says Thorpe, they are not only ignorant of the particulars but generally unaware that America is indirectly financing the nearly $US3 billion programme. Americans, whom Thorpe says, "have grown up with a point-of-view of sympathy and support for Israel" are thus partially responsible for the long-term effects of Jewish settlement on Arab land in the West bank and Gaza. What his book should do, says Thorpe, is to expose Americans "to the view of those who are clearly dedicated to Israel but feel it must address the Palestinian question if it is to succeed."

Thorpe's book, published by the Foundation for Middle East Peace which funds primarily books and documentaries intended to increase awareness about the Arab-Israeli conflict in America, does indeed expose the reader to the opinions of persons opposed to the settlement policy, most of whom are Israeli citizens and well-known personalities. In fact, the bulk of the book is primarily quotations from these Israelis, many of whom are known to students of the current conflict in the Middle East. Names such as statesman Abba Eban, author Irving Howe, journalist Amos Elon, historian Jacob Talmon, and Knesset member Amnon Rubenstein all appear, as if many of Israel's most influential citizens were vocally opposing the government's rapid establishment of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. This star-quality cast, assumes the reader, is intended to influence leaders in the American Jewish community who will now be able to speak out too, and members of the community who are perhaps for the first time hearing Israeli leaders disagree with government policy.

The problem is, however, that the book creates the mistaken impression that the greatest percentage of Israeli leaders and citizens actively oppose the settlement policy. If so, where are they? How could the government of Israel so blatantly ignore such voices, if raised loudly enough, unless there were an equal number of voices loudly rooting for the settlements themselves? Would it not have been better to present a moral argument against a belligerent occupier's theft of another people's land with a few supporting quotations that painted a more accurate picture of Israeli public opinion? Instead Thorpe has chosen to focus on the "dovish" sector of Israeli society hoping to encourage other dovish American Jews to push for an even more dovish resolution to the conflict.

Yet Israeli researcher Meron Benvenisti, whom Thorpe quotes in his book, disagrees with the assertion that there are that many Israelis opposed to settlement of the West Bank. "Most Israelis perceive the occupation of the territories as a direct continuation of the Zionist enterprise," said Benvenisti (p.100). In fact, in a footnote in Thorpe's concluding chapter he cites Benvenisti as believing "that the Israeli expansionists have already won, that the whole political discussion, which is based on the premise that things are reversible, is irrelevant, and has been overtaken by events, and that the conflict has become an internal ethnic stuggle between superiors and inferiors." Thorpe concludes, however, that "Benvenisti's view of the permanency of Israeli control of the West Bank simply is not acceptable, as the consequences are too serious" (p 152).

Would it also not have been more informative to have given the readers a chance to hear eloquent Palestinian opinions intermingled with the Israeli views? Quoting only one Palestinian — deported Mayor of Halhoul, Mohammed Milhem — makes the Palestinian view look like an afterthought rather than something to be considered seriously. Thorpe defended his reliance on Jewish quotations by saying: "Palestinian comments are suspect as carrying an Arab or Palestinian bias. If you're seeking to explain to Jews that maybe the themes that they have heard all of their life may warrant some examination, it stands to reason that it will be much more influential if Abba Eban says it himself." Though having Eban speak to a primarily Jewish audience is reasonable, it is also logical to introduce them to a substantial smattering of Palestinian opinion if indeed the intention is to increase the audience's awareness and to promote peaceful relations, which the Palestinians do have an equal share in.

Prescription For Conflict is neither a particularly eloquent text nor a very strong argument. It is, as Thorpe says, the most "elemental" presentation of the basic issues. The structure of material presented in the book adds to this feeling of simplicity, the fact that the book reads like a *Reader's Digest* Famous Quotations page. The heavy emphasis on pre-textual writing (the first 28 pages of the book) — including a preface, foreword and introduction — prepares the reader for more than the text can offer. The short chapters following, appear even smaller in comparison with this introduction. They do, however, offer the novice a bit to mull over and eventually digest.

Thorpe is very careful not to ruffle any Jewish feathers by the quotations he has chosen and his continual emphasis that criticising Israeli settlement policy is not equivalent to anti-Israeli feeling or, even worse, anti-Zionism. He quotes the American organiser of the Committee of Concerned American Jews, Prof Seymour Martin Lipset, as saying: "If the Committee of Concerned American Jews does nothing else, we intend to make clear that questioning the policies of the government of Israel does not reflect any diminution of support for Israel. ...The fact is, that our criticism of Israeli government policies is a reflection of our love and dedication to Israel" (p.141). Thorpe himself reflects this opinion in his conclusion. "Israel is dear to Americans for many reasons," he says, "not least because it is dear to American Jews. But the conditions on the West Bank are not static; they are deteriorating daily. It is, therefore, imperative that Americans address the issue. Israeli interests, Jewish interests, American interests are at stake" (p.151).

Indeed, American interests are involved and Thorpe mildly criticises US government policy when he says: "Despite universal disapproval of Israel's settlement programme, the US often terms, 'flawed' the criticism or initiatives of others, while itself finding difficulty in proposing specific, alternative language or programmes to implement its

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Palestine and Culture

Boulos Farah, an old unionist from Haifa, spoke about the labour movement in pre 1948 Palestine at the First Palestinian Thought Conference, sponsored by Mawakeb magazine in Nazareth.

Palestine Before 1948

by Said al-Ghazali

The "First Conference on Palestinian Thought," sponsored by the Nazareth-based *Mawakeb* magazine, spanned three days and included lectures on Palestinian society, culture, literature and folklore before 1948. It was convened in Nazareth from May 10 to 12, and attracted more than 100 intellectuals and academics from Palestinian and Israeli universities.

The aim of the conference — to encourage Palestinian academics to research and document Palestinian heritage before 1948 — was achieved. The conference was divided into four forums: Society, Culture, Heritage, and Literature. Fourteen lectures on various topics were delivered by well-known speakers, many of them academics who had been involved in research on these issues. Some lectures contained valuable information and others had no analysis or new ideas. Most lectures dealt with culture in a coherent way. However, some did not relate culture to the social infrastructre present before 1948. Nightly entertainment programmes of music and poetry recitation reinforced the cultural message of the conference, as did an exhibit of folkloric art by Kamel Mughrani

Opening Session

Representatives from local Palestinian universities spoke in the opening session, about the cultural goals the Palestinians aimed to reach in the conference. One of the key aims they mentioned was preserving the Palestinian roots in the land of Palestine. This was clearly stressed by Dr. Abdel Latif Aqel, head of the Centre for Documentation and Research at Najah University. Aqel talked about the impact of experience on the formation of identity, and stressed the impact of time and place on the shaping of the Palestinian identity.

After the opening session there were three lectures on Palestinian society. Other West Bankers who made introductory comments included Diab Ayyush, head of the Art Department at Bethlehem University and Mustafa Natshe, acting deposed mayor of Hebron. Besides the prominent political, religious, and national figures who expressed support for the conference, Fadwa Tuqan, a well-known poetessfrom Nablus, sent a telegramme to the conference stressing its important cultural connotations.

Forum on Society

Immediately following the opening session, there were three lectures on Palestinian society before 1948.

Dr. Ghazi Falah, a researcher at the Taibeh folk centre, gave a lecture on the geographic and political implications of drawing the map of Palestine. Falah outlined the usual procedure used by scholars in determining any country's borders — staking out a region, determining borders, putting signs on the borders, and establishing administrative outposts at the borders. Falah asserted that political deals like the Sykes-Picot agreement between France and Britain, the Hussein-McMahon talks, and pressures from the Zionist movement determined the borders of Palestine, not natural processes. Falah said that during negotiations in the 1920's, the Zionists used geographical arguments to demand the expansion of the borders to Lebanon. The Zionists argued that they needed water from Lebanon and that they wanted to connect Palestine with Qunaitra in the Golan Heights and Tyre in South Lebanon. They also claimed they needed a port on the Red Sea and pastures in the Naqab and in Sinai. The final endorsement of borders was made on November 23, 1920. No signs were placed along the borders, Falah noted.

In his lecture about the labour movement in Palestine, Boulos Farah, an old unionist from Haifa, addressed the audience: "I am a Palestinian document, an eyewitness and a participant in events, more honest and correct than the British archives." Farah described the three main Palestinian workers' organisations which were active in the 1930s and 1940s — the Arab Workers Federation, the Federation of Arab Workers Unions, and the National Liberation League. Their main objectives, he said, were to protest work without pay, the very cheap wages and the long hours. Not all unions followed the same strategy, he said, noting that the Palestinian bourgeois led by Abdel Hamid Haymour and Sami Taha tried to link Palestinian unions with the Jewish Histadrut and the British Workers Party rather than working independently. The Histadrut, Farah said, was antagonistic towards Palestinian workers.

Dr. Mariam Mar'i, a lecturer on international comparative education at Haifa University, talked about charitable, social, and militant activities of Palestinian women before 1948. She found only two sources written by women before 1948 *The Arab Woman and the Palestinian Cause*, by Matila Maghnam, and *Abir and Majd*, written by Asma Tubi. Mar'i talked about education for women in Palestine under Ottoman rule, about missionary schools for women, and about women's charitable societies. She noted that active Palestinian women came from the upper class and were usually wives of political activists. Wahedeh Khaldi, chairperson of the Arab Women's Society which was established in Jerusalem in 1919, coined the slogan, "Get your bread by your own efforts." Mar'i noted that Palestinian women played an important role of mediator in the political conflicts within the national movement.

Forum on Culture

The second day of the conference included two forums on Palestinian culture and heritage before 1948. Dr. Sami Mar'i, lecturer of Education at Haifa University, focused on the development of education in Palestinian society which was influenced by religious and ethnic divisions. Palestinian teachers and others who were active in education discouraged the use of force in teaching and encouraged listening to students, allowing sports, publishing children's books, and stressed the importance of preserving the character of the individual.

Mar'i cited the activities of some Palestinians in particular — Khalil Tutah worked to expand the educational base in Palestine by advocating the establishment of schools in all areas; Ishaq Husseini and Khalil Sakakin tried to train teachers; Husseini and Rawhi Khatib called for establishing Palestinian universities in Palestine. Mar'i also described Palestinian attitudes toward English-language teaching. Some considered it important as a key to understanding the West, he said, while others deemed it dangerous because it made youths leave their villages to seek employment elsewhere. Palestinian educators stressed the importance of the Arabic language as an expression of national identity.

Mar'i summarised the aims of Palestinian education in the pre-1948 period as freedom for students, the liberation of the homeland, national unity, and assertion of the fact that Palestine was an Arab country, an integral part of the Arab nation. Teachers also tried to reconciliate between science and religion and demanded that schools be independent from government administration.

Khalil Nakhleh, from the Geneva-based Welfare Association, gave an excellent lecture on the role of political parties and intellectuals in Palestine since 1911. He concluded that Palestinian intellectuals who participated in political conferences and parties evolved changing political principles and stands. Nakhleh identified the main political aims of Palestinians at that time as: Fighting against Jewish immigration and land sales, calling for a parliamentary Palestinian goverment, and rejecting the Jewish homeland. Resisting the British authorities was not a goal that all political parties and intellectuals shared, Nakhleh said. Some advocated cooperation.

In the early part of the 20th century, Nakhleh noted, some intellectuals and parties, notably the "non-centre party," advocated autonomy for Arab provinces within the Ottoman Empire and appeared ambivalent towards the Zionist movement. Others preferred to struggle more directly by sending delegations and letters of protest to the British.

Hanna Abu Hanna, headmaster of the Orthodox school in Haifa, talked about education since 1889, when there was only one preparatory school in Jerusalem. Another one was established in Acre in 1895 and a third in Nablus in 1897. Abu Hanna described the intellectual life in Tulkarm and Nablus and said most intellectuals from that area left to live in Istanbul, Beirut, and Europe.

Dr. Said Zeidani, a lecturer of cultural studies at Bir Zeit and a resident of Tamra, was scheduled to talk about the philosophy in Palestine. However, he dealt with the subject only indirectly. Instead he discussed sectarianism and said it has no finite definition but is rather a relational concept — one element of the changing whole. Geography, principles, ideas, practices, and awareness are essential elements in defining sectarianism in any given situation. Tribalism, familism, and regionalism are all types of sectarianism, he said.

Forum on Heritage

In the forum on Palestinian heritage, Shukri Arraf from Ma'alia spoke about the design of a Palestinian village before 1948. "It was formed of three parts; the nucleus in the centre, the root area immediately surrounding the nucleus, and the agricultural land that circumscribes the whole village. The first two parts represented only four percent of the village area, while the third was 96 percent. The nucleus was divided into four quarters separated by alleys

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WINDOW ON THE ARAB PRESS

The prisoner exchange, Arafat's statements about UN Resolution 242 and the continuing attacks on Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut were the top stories in the local press this week.

Palestinian papers published names, photos and interviews with the most prominent of the 1,150 Palestinian prisoners who were released in exchange for three Israeli POWs from the Lebanon war.

PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat's statements to the *Washington Post* about being ready to accept UN Resolution 242 on the condition that the US recognise the Palestinians right to self-determination received positive reactions locally.

Fierce fighting in West Beirut, especially attacks on the Palestinian refugee camps, was widely covered. Local Palestinian papers condemned these attacks and called for an immediate halt to the fighting.

242 and the Maximum Political Move

Resolution 242 is the most famous resolution passed on the Palestinian cause and the Middle East crisis since 1947. This resolution was accepted by all Arab regimes after their defeat in 1967. But the PLO rejected it and worked for another resolution or an amendment so as to secure Palestinian rights.

However, an American veto prevented it from achieving this goal. The US still tries to impose this resolution on the PLO, even though it ignores Palestinian rights. Yasir Arafat expressed his readiness to accept the resolution if the US recognises the Palestinian rights. Will the US understand this approach, or will it persist in its present stand?

We warn that this is the last chance.

AL FAJR
May 17

Unencouraging Reactions

The Israeli and American reactions to Arafat's recent statements are not encouraging. They both said that accepting 242 is not enough; the PLO has to recognise Israel first, and to abandon the military option. In other words Israel and the US want the Palestinian march to start from square one again.

The US response to the Palestinian demand for self-determination was also unclear. In view of this, the possibilities for a peaceful solution are not encouraging. Since a just peace is the goal sought by all, the other parties should introduce a real change in their positions.

AL QUDS
May 17

The International Conference

Once again, Yasir Arafat affirmed last night the Palestine Liberation Organisation's adherence to the idea of an international conference as the only acceptable frame in the search for a just peace, according to the basis of international legitimacy in the region.

This assurance comes to consolidate the clear Palestinian position, which has been (and still is) aborting American manoeuvres in the region that try to monopolise political moves in this region in order to carry out schemes aimed at liquidating the Palestinian people's legitimate rights.

Adherence to the international conference means adherence to international legitimacy. It also means adherence to the role of the friend, the Soviet Union; adherence to the national rights of the Palestinians to return, to self-determination, and to the establishment of the independent (Palestinian) state; and, finally, thwarting initiatives of Shultz, Murphy, and other American envoys who are trying to ignore the legitimate rights (of the Palestinian people) and bypass the role of the PLO.

There is no doubt that Farouq Qaddumi's recent visit to Moscow enhanced Palestinian-Soviet relations. Yesterday, Abu Ammar affirmed the firmness of these relations. And there is no doubt that the Palestinian position, based on Palestine National Council (PNC) resolutions, will always be able to impose the Palestinian card on any equation in the region.

AL SHA'AB
May 18

Backward Indicators

When 242 is discussed the most important conclusion is that peace will be achieved through exchange. Israel is to withdraw from the Arab territories occupied in 1967, and the Arabs will recognise it. Thus the principle of "land for peace" will be achieved. But conditions in 1985 are different from those of 1967. The PLO has emerged as a political force and the Palestinian problem has changed from that of refugees to that of a people demanding political rights.

From this it becomes clear what Arafat meant when he expressed readiness to accept 242 in return for US recognition of these Palestinian rights, foremost among them the right to self-determination. Should the US do that, the rest of the countries on the UN Security Council would agree to amend 242.

As for Israel, its policy in the occupied territories aims at changing the social, political and economic structure in these territories so they will become in time an integral part of Israel. If anything, this indicates that Israel is trying to impose a *de facto* reality that would make it impossible to implement 242. Israel went even further when it started to inspect the credentials of would-be participants in any delegation to make sure they are not PLO members. So the current situation does not point to any progress. It points to a movement movement.

AL QUDS
May 20

Smile Our Great People

The situation is much bigger than words. Our sons and brothers have left the prisons and returned to the warmth of their families.

Many a tear will be shed... Families will be reunited. Fathers will meet their sons and embrace them for the first time.

What can we say? Let's rejoice and smile. The liberation of the prisoners, we hope, will be a prelude to the liberation of the whole people.

AL SHA'AB
May 21

The Historic Achievement

The talk about the POW exchange leads us directly to the issue of the achievement of a people toward building a human society, a society where human conflict moves aside and its resources can be rechanneled for the service of man.

What happened yesterday is a great national achievement for our people. While appreciating this achievement, we still hope that all prisoners will one day be liberated.

AL MITHAQ
May 21

Prescription

Continued from page 10

own officially stated opposition" (p.146). In his interview with *Al Fajr*, Thorpe expressed guarded optimism about American actions: "I'm not sure what we can expect in the way of US leadership. I think facts and figures will force themselves on the United States. I'd like to think that American officials are letting it be known, one way or another, that they do think Israel should be rethinking its attitudes and policies with respect to the West Bank. But you've got to realise that American politicians are under the greatest restraint, greatest pressure to appear supportive of Israel."

The danger in discussing such a complicated issue as the Arab-Israeli conflict is in either saying too little or too much. Though Thorpe must have been aware of this and therefore structured his text solely around the settlement issue, there other more fundamental issues that his various contributors touch on, such as self-determination for the Palestinians and even the nature of Zionism itself he does not discuss well. Thorpe's presentation of the settlement issue is sketchy and even sketchier on Palestinian self-determination. There are hints that accepting a halt to settlements might lead eventually to an improvement in the Palestinian *status quo*, but Thorpe chooses not to elaborate on this issue. And concerning Zionism itself: although Flapan presents a picture of the ideology and contradicts himself when he first says Zionists like Ben-Gurion never intended to settle in Arab areas and then is quoted in a footnote as citing a statement of Ben-Gurion's to the effect that Israel should abolish partition and expand to the whole of Palestine, Thorpe prefers to quote dovish Zionists rather than tackle the fundamental issue. Of course, Thorpe is writing to an American Zionist audience, yet he admits that they know very little about Zionism and the situation it has created in the Middle East. "The American Jewish community would have a very, very low mark on anything to do with the history of Israel, the Zionist movement, the creation of Israel, the issues that have happened since," he said.

The book fails to address the real problem of Israeli denial of Palestinian rights. It may spur some members of the American Jewish community to speak out against further settlement, but will it spur them even further to question the Zionist intention towards the Palestinians themselves? Thorpe was aware of the importance of this questioning in his *Al Fajr* interview, but still chose to tread softly in the book. "The effective argument is that the country that they are so devoted to, is acting unwisely and has psychological blocks in their attitudes towards peace and the Arabs," he said. "I wasn't seeking, in the book, to ferret out the most unlovely scenes or expressions but to tactfully and reasonably portray the development and attitudes that are growing in Israeli society towards accepting the *status quo* of annexation and permanent control of another people."

Despite the book's drawbacks, Thorpe's *Prescription for Conflict* is a beginning, a start nevertheless at prescribing a more peaceful resolution to the conflict. Thorpe's personal peace prescription is "permitting the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and in the diaspora to have the West Bank and Gaza as their homeland, their state if they wish it or whatever they wish. I would like to think that there could be all sorts of forces at work to help make such a homeland a success." Although this may be more than many of Thorpe's readers will be able to say, at least, as he says, the book can begin a dialogue. "I think that I did enough to promote thought," he says, and in a world of thoughtless cruelty and senseless governmental policy where one people try to rule over another, thought is at least a positive beginning. ■

Arab MKs

Continued from page 9

sentative, of all the Palestinians outside the 'green line.'"

On a Palestinian state. "As I see it, there are two nations and movements: Palestinian and Israeli. Israel has historical and other rights; the Palestinians have historical, national, and religious rights. Every one demands the same demands. I think the solution is to give the two nations the right to construct a state for themselves. Any solution must fulfil the legitimate rights of the two nations. Israel has fulfilled the rights of the Jewish people. They have their state. I see that in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, there is a place for an independent Palestinian state that will fulfil the rights of the Palestinians — first of all, the right of self-determinaton. And the only situation that will give peace to this area would be a state near a state and a nation near a nation. I want the rights of the two nations — as I said, I'm Israeli from one side and I'm Palestinian from the other — so I think this solution would be suitable for the two movements: for the two nations.

"If there were an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, we will not leave our villages; we will stay to live as faithful citizens. But we will be satisfied because our nation got its independence. Our roots are very deep in our land. It will be like the case of the Jews who live in the US or France. And anyone who is not satisfied and wants to live in the Palestinian state can do so. But I think that only a very small minority would. We will continue on our land, in our villages, in our homes..."

On his role in the peace process: "Peace cannot come only by words and talk. I think by action. I want to act. I left the field of education and came to politics to act. I tried to reach Amman, for example, to address the PNC. I will continue to make the two parties nearer and nearer, and to try to make a real dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis, in which MKs and even ministers I hope will participate.

"I was one of the people who organised a peaceful 'lobby' inside the Labour Party as a pressure team that we must use on the leaders of our party.

"I also want to act for peace by becoming the bridge of peace — the Arabs in Israel, that is. Or by setting up an Arab team for peace, an Arab movement like Peace Now, that will act to pressure the Israeli society and government to take further steps.

"I intend to raise in the Knesset a motion which I call, according to the Palestinian-Jordanian agreement, "There is a need for an Israeli intitiative for peace in the Middle East." And I want to call for direct negotiations between Israel, and the PLO and Jordan, with the participation of other wrold powers — the UN, Egypt, the USSR, the US, and others. They must reach a solution that will fulfil the rights of the two nations, the Palestinians and the Israelis."

Palestine

Continued from page 11

with long walls on which shrapnel glass was fixed. Churches, mosques, shrines and small schools were located in the nucleus. Arraf noted that houses were built adjacent to one another for defensive purposes. Homes were built to house animals as well as family members.

Arraf observed that land in the root area was the most fertile, due to availability of animal manure. With the arrival of the British Mandate authorities, he explained, houses were no longer restricted to the nucleus and construction spread to the root area. Houses became larger, and there was no need to build them close together. He attributed the change to "the feeling of security which was evoked when government authority become stronger." The land was planted with many different kinds of trees. The financially-pressed Turkish government encouraged peasants to cultivate land and claim ownership for the purpose of collecting taxes.

Dr Ghawi Ghawi, dean of the music department at Najah University and a Nazarene, spoke about music and musicians in Palestine before 1948. Palestinian music was distinquished by its harmony and easy continuity in tone. Palestinian musicians, many of whom received training at the music institute in Haifa or in churches, borrowed from the Spanish "Andalusian" heritage. There is also a dynamic and aesthetic connection between the words and the music, the words being equally important in the composition. Prominent Palestinian musicians included Yehia Lababedi who worked as head of the music department at the Palestinian radio station and wrote different types of light compositions. Mohammed Karim and the Felaifel brothers also wrote in this trend. Others composed more classical works, including Oghasteen Lana, Iskender Shahtoun, Michael Demolorian, Hanna Khel and others. The well-known poets Abu Salma, Ibrahim Tuqan, Jalal Zraiq wrote lyrics. Dr Ghawi, who spent several months collecting information from musicians and available documents, said that Palestinian music is a reflection of the political and economic atmosphere. During the lecture, three Palestinian musicians performed Palestinian music.

Dr Mone'm Haddad, a lecturer of folklore at Haifa University, talked about pilgrims who had come to Palestine for religious motives since the fourth century. These pilgrims wrote about various folkloric and religious traditions and sites: Jerusalem, Ba'albak, Halab, and Bethlehem for Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Haddad also talked about the achievements of those researchers who wrote on folklore, such as Tawfiq Kana'an, Ilias Nasralla Haddad, Omar Barghouthi, Astafan Mohammed Astafan and others.

Essam Abbasi delivered a lecture on behalf of Abdel Latif Barghouthi about the structure, motifs, rhymes and rhythms of the popular poem. Barghouthi said that there is similarity in structure and theme between the *fus'ha* (classical) and colloquial poems.

Forum on Literature

The third day, the fourth and last forum was held on literature. In his lecture on images of land in Palestinian poetry, Dr George Ganazeh, a lecturer of Arabic literature from Haifa University, spoke about the Palestinian poets who warned the people about the danger of Zionism in Palestine. The poet Isa'af Nashashibi expressed his fears of the schemes for Palestine as early as 1910. In a poem written in 26 verses, he called on Palestinians to remain strongly committed to the land and not sell it to Zionists. The Lebanese poet Wade'i Bustani, who was a capable politician and adviser to the British military authorities in Palestine, spoke about the same dangers in a poem entitled "Palestinians." When he saw a room belonging to the Jewish agency in the headquarters of the British Colonel Parker in 1917, he made a connection between this room and the Jewish homeland. Bustani said, in a long poem: *I observe the "homeland" becoming concrete, I see a room in the palace.*

Ganazeh also spoke of other poets who wrote about land, including Abdel Rahim Mahmoud *(The martyr of tree village)*, Ibrahim Tuqan, Burhan al-Din Aboushi, Abu Eqbal Yaqoubi and others. They rallied the people to fight landbrokers.

Fawzi Abdulla, the responsible editor of *Mawakeb* magazine, talked about the first Palestinian short stories. He said that the first short story in Palestine was written in 1824, by Mohammed Ahmad Tamimi.

Riyad Eghbariyeh criticised and analysed four poetic plays, the only plays written before 1948. He pointed to the absence of an Arab theatrical heritage. Eghbariyeh talked in detail about *The Martyr's Homeland* and *The Andalusia Ghost* written by Burhan al-Din Abboushi from Jenin. The first play was a review of events from 1915 till the end of the 1936 revolution. It called for national unity. *The Andalusia Ghost* spoke about 1948. It depicted real events such as the Jenin battle which was waged by the Iraqi army. It included detailed descriptions of clashes and dramatic incidents. Eghbariyeh criticised the direct political approach of the play because he said it detracted from the artistic. The poet also did not control the many themes in the play, he said. The play *Emru Qayes* by Mohammed Hassan Ala el-Din, which was written in 1883, deals with a concrete historic event. Emru Qayes was a king of the Kinda tribe in the Arab peninsula and a very prominent poet in the sixth century. The play deals with his revenge for his father's murder. The same is true, he said, of the play *The Assassination of Kulayb* written by Muhy el-Din Safadi which dealt with the *Basus* war between the Bakr and Taghleb tribes who fought in the Arab peninsula for 40 years in the sixth century. Eghbariyeh praised the style and the artistic structure of the latter two plays and compared them with Shakespeare.

Despite time limitations, the four forums triggered much debate among the participants. Dr Sami Mar'i made the closing speech of evaluation. He described the conference as a success. However, he admitted that lecturers came primarily from within the "green line" and said, "We must call all academic institutes and universities in the second conference."

The conference made no attempt to issue recommendations or decisions for researchers. However, it succeeded in documenting Palestinian thought in the period before 1948 and focusing attention on important cultural issues.

WEEKLY REVIEW

Latin Bishop Yacoub Beltriti speaking at the 39th graduating class of Al-Ahliyeh College in Ramallah. Vivian Khalaf (fourth from left) spoke at the graduation on behalf of her father, the late Karim Khalaf, who was scheduled to speak. She contributed JD2000 to the high school. /Saleh Abu Teen.

May 15, 1985

MAYOR PROTESTS BODY SEARCH

Beit Jala Mayor Farah al-Aa'raj has cabled the Israeli police and defence minister, the inspector-general of the police, and the head of the civil administration, strongly protesting an Israeli soldier's attempt to search him before he entered the civil administration's offices. He urged the Israeli officials to stop such measures which, he said, "harm the integrity of the notables."

BRITISH CONSUL MEETS SHAWWA, ABU RAHMEH

Deposed Gaza Mayor Haj Rashad al-Shawwa and the head of the Gaza Bar Association, Fayez Abu Rahmeh, met in Gaza with the British consul and a senior official from the British Foreign Ministry. They discussed the situation in the Gaza Strip and several other issues.

Shawwa and Abu Rahmeh asked the British official to appeal to the european community to pressure the US so it would recognise the PLO.

PLO OFFICE IN COPENHAGEN

The Palestine Liberation Organisation opened an information office in Copenhagen, Denmark. The new office was opened despite opposition from some circles in Denmark.

4 CONVICTED OF HOISTING FLAG IN '82

Four youths from the village of Iksal in the Nazareth district were found guilty by Hadera magistrate's court of flying the Palestinian flag during a demonstration marking the anniversary of the Sabra and Shatila massacres.

According to the charge sheet, the four participated in a demonstration in the village on September 9, 1982, and hoisted the black, green, white, and red Palestinian flag. Two of them then went into the local mosque, and called through its loudspeakers for the establishment of a Palestinian state, it stated.

Sentence will be passed on May 30.

KHADDOURI EMPLOYEES WARNED QUESTIONED

Employees of the Khaddouri Agricultural College in Tulkarm have been officially warned and summoned for interrogation by the Israeli authorities following their warning strike last week.

TULKARM, AL-BIREH YOUTHS JAILED

An Israeli military court in Tulkarm sentenced Riyad Tayeh to 1 year in prison and 2 years suspended on charges of membership in an illegal organisation. Tayeh, a resident of Tulkarm, has been working in the private sector in Jordan for the last 6 years.

In Jenin, an Israeli military court sentenced Anwar Kamal Saleh al-Salhi of al-Bireh to 10 months' imprisonment on security charges.

May 16, 1985

JORDAN NOT READY FOR WATERMELONS

The first truck loaded with watermelons left the Jordan valley area for the Jordan market May 12. But the Jordanian authorities turned the truck back on the pretext that they have to wait for the committee's decision on the quantity of watermelons produced.

AL-UMMA STUDENTS ON STRIKE

The students' movement at al-Umma College in Jerusalem continued their strike for the third day in protest of the dismissal of some students for not paying college fees.

The strike is also to protest the administration's failure to respond to student demands submitted to the dean who described the students' reprezentatives as a gang of saboteurs and instigators who want the college shut down.

2 KIDS JAILED

The Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced 14-year-old Ma'moun Mahmoud al-Ramahi of Jalazon camp, to 2 months in prison and 6 months suspended and a IS100,000 fine for throwing stones. The court also sentenced 13-year-old Mohammed Khaled al-Ramahi to 1 month in prison and a IS150,000 fine for throwing stones.

May 17, 1985

BUS TORCHED IN RAFAH

An Israeli bus owned by a tourist agency was set on fire in the Tal Sultan area in Rafah. The blaze completely destroyed the bus. Police are investigating.

CITRUS TREES SABOTAGED

Dozens of citrus trees owned by 8 farmers from the village of Baqa el-Sharqiyeh in the Tulkarm district were destroyed last week by unidentified persons. Such incidents have recently increased in the village.

BRITISH LABOUR PARTY INVITES PALESTINIAN OFFICIAL

The British Labour Party will invite a Palestinian official to attend its annual conference this year as an observer, the PLO representative in London said yesterday.

TRAVEL BAN LIFTED

Qalqilya residents over 40 years of age have been permitted by the Israeli authorities to travel to Jordan via Damyeh Bridge.

2 JAILED FOR MEMBERSHIP

The Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Khaled Mohammed Ali al-Shubaki to 6 months in jail and 12 months suspended on charges of membership in a Palestinian organisation. The court also sentenced Mahmoud Mohammed Qassem of Nablus to 8 months in jail and 16 months suspended on the same charge.

May 19, 1985

SOLDIER STABBED IN JERUSALEM

An Israeli soldier was stabbed in the back with a dagger by two unidentified assailants as he was walking in the Old City of Jerusalem. The soldier was reportedly slightly wounded.

Many Israeli soldiers and police rushed to the site, threw a cordon around the area, and detained about 30 passersby for questioning.

TRUCK STONED IN SHU'FAT

A truck with yellow plates was stoned as it was passing in Shu'fat, just north of Jerusalem. Israel Radio reported that one of the truck windows was smashed, but no one was hurt. The truck was driven by an Arab from Jerusalem.

AL-BIREH RESIDENTS DEMAND FREE ELECTIONS

Residents of al-Bireh have signed a memorandum calling on the Israeli defence minister to allow them to choose their own municipality through free elections.

The memorandum said: "We, residents of al-Bireh, urge you to intervene to put an end to the generally deteriorating situation in the city, for which the Israeli authorities bear full responsibility." It called on the Israeli minister to cancel the

Continued on page 15

Bir Zeit University sponsored a Palestinian culture festival May 18. Among the many shows and exhibits was a Palestinian wedding show. /AO photo.

Continued from page 14

decision to dissolve the elected al-Bireh municipal council, or to allow the tax-paying residents to choose their own representatives through new general elections.

NABLUS WOMAN GETS 26 MONTHS

Kawthar Abdullah Mughrabi from Nablus was sentenced by the Israeli military court to 26 months in prison and 14 months suspended for membership in a Palestinian organisation and weapons training.

WB TEACHERS TO WORK IN JORDAN

The Jordanian Ministry of Education and Culture has employed 25 West Bank teachers to work in Jordanian schools.

GAZAN JAILED

The Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced Majdi Hijazi al-Fayed, 23, to 31 months in prison on charges of membership in an Palestinian organisation.

QALANDYA MEN JAILED FOR MEMBERSHIP

An Israeli military court in Ramallah sentenced Qalandya residents, Jamal Diab Lafi to one year in prison and three years suspended, and Sami Ali al-Kassab to ten months in prison and three years suspended. Both were charged with membership in an Palestinian organisation.

May 20, 1985

SETTLERS BLOCK MAIN ROAD

Jewish settlers from Shilo yesterday blocked the main Ramallah-Nablus highway with their cars to protest a stone-throwing incident near Jalazon camp in which a settler was injured.

TEACHER DETAINED

Israeli authorities detained Fadel al-Rimawi, a teacher at the Beitunia High School, in retaliation for the government-employed teachers' strike in the West Bank two weeks ago.

May 21, 1985

JIBRIL RECEIVES PRISONERS IN TRIPOLI

Some 485 Palestinian prisoners released by Israel have arrived in Libya, where they were met by Ahmad Jibril, secretary-general of the PFLP-GC. The released prisoners were then transferred yesterday morning to the Beka'a Valley in Lebanon.

NABLUS YOUTH GETS 25 YEARS

Hassan Hajjaj, 23, of Nablus was sentenced to 25 years in prison by an Israeli military court in Nablus on charges of being an accomplice in the killing of a suspected collaborator. The main defendant in the case was released on Monday in the prisoners' swap, although he had admitted that he was the one who killed the suspected collaborator.

JALAZON SCHOOL SHUT

Israeli military authorities ordered the Jalazon refugee camp school closed after its pupils reportedly hurled stones at Israeli vehicles. Israel Radio said an Israeli passenger was wounded by stones thrown at his car as it passed the camp two days ago.

Prisoners

Continued from page 1

Among the freed prisoners were 99 people from 6 Arab countries, and 6 more from other countries including the renowned Kozo Okamoto, a member of the Japanese Red Army who was the only survivor of the Lod airport operation of 1970. His two comrades, also members of the Japanese Red Army working in association with the PFLP, were killed. At least 27 Israelis were killed and 80 injured in the attack.

The freed prisoners were flown from Geneva to Tripoli, Libya, where they were greeted by PFLP-GC leader Ahmad Jibril. Later, most of them were transferred to the Beqa'a Valley in Lebanon.

In the occupied territories, prisoners reported that the Israelis gathered those to be freed at Jnaid and Asqalon prisons where they were released on Monday evening. The first bus carrying 20 freed prisoners left Jnaid prison in Nablus at 4:30 pm towards the city centre where they were met with massive celebrations. Thousands of jubilant residents stood on both sides of the main street to salute the prisoners, as Israeli military patrols released them in small groups at different intervals in the city. Later on, other buses left Jnaid for various parts of the West Bank and Israel carrying freed prisoners to points near their homes.

Ali Jadeh, from Jerusalem, who was serving a 20 year sentence said that they were released at three locations in Ramallah, where they were picked up by their families or by Arab passers-by, if families were not present. One Jerusalem resident said he spent several hours looking for his released friends, but could not find them. He added that they were picked up by residents who were on their way to Jerusalem. Others were left stranded in the Latrun area, more than 30 kilometres west of Jerusalem after the Israelis let them off in that remote area.

Meanwhile, extremist Kiryat Arba settlers led by Rabbi Moshe Levinger attacked homes of Palestinians who were celebrating their relatives' release.

The third group of 150 men were turned over at the Quneitra crossing in the Golan Heights.

The prisoner exchange agreement was concluded after lengthy negotiations and mediation efforts over a span of three years. Efforts to conclude the agreement were deadlocked until last September over Israel's insistence that four other soldiers missing in action be linked to the exchange. In a press conference held at the Geneva airport after the exchange the head Israeli negotiator, Shmuel Tamir, said that the breakthrough in the stalled negotiations came after the PFLP-GC admitted to holding a third soldier, one of the Israelis missing-in-action. Talks stalled again after Israel refused to release 36 prisoners on the list submitted by Omar al-Shihabi, the PFLP-GC chief negotiator. The deadlock was broken again when former Austrian Chancellor, Bruno Kreisky managed to convince Israel to back down on 18 of the 36.

Israeli officials and observers said that during the negotiations they were forced to make too many concessions and consequently had to "pay a heavy price" in return for the Israeli POWs. In addition to the release of over 1100 prisoners, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that Israel was obliged to allow a message from Ahmad Jibril, the secretary general of the PFLP-GC to be read aloud to the prisoners. "The PFLP-GC's members, cadres, and leadership present their revolutionary compliments to every militant in his name, highly appreciate your heroic struggles, admire your long-standing patience, your suffering and pain inside the jails, would like to convey the tiding of your impending liberation and release," the message stated.

Palestinian negotiators insisted on the release of many prisoners who were serving long sentences and on allowing those who held Israeli ID cards to stay in the country.

Palestinian negotiators were also careful to have prisoners themselves verify the names of those to be released to make sure the Israelis didn't try any tricks. Consequently, a two-member higher committee was formed to supervise the technical details of the prisoners' release.

More Palestinian political prisoners are expected to be exchanged for the bodies of the Israeli soldiers missing-in-action in the near future. "

Al Fajr Arabic daily reported May 21 that Fatah was preparing to exchange three bodies of Israeli soldiers for more Palestinian prisoners.

A previous prisoner exchange was concluded in November 1983 when more than 5000 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners from Ansar detention camp in south Lebanon and nearly 100 from the occupied territories and Israel were exchanged for six Israeli soldiers, who were held by Fatah.

Lebanon

Continued from page 1

north of Sidon, and managed to occupy Amal's five offices in the village.

Palestinian leaders condemned Amal for perpetrating massacres in the refugee camps. Bassam Abu Sharif, the official spokesman for the PFLP, said the fighting was triggered by Amal's intention to disarm Palestinians in the camps. He asserted that the Palestinians have full rights to defend themselves. Abu Sharif, who is on an official visit to Algiers, said that Algeria is contacting the Lebanese government and Amal to stop the fighting.

South Lebanon

In south Lebanon, Israeli troops evacuated four kilometers May 21 in preparation for completing their withdrawal from the area, according to an Agence France Press report. The report from Beirut said that the Israeli army dismantled eight positions in east Lebanon north of the village of Maims. Israel had earlier announced its intention to complete its pullout from all of south Lebanon by June. Israel plans for the "Security Zone" it wants to maintain in south Lebanon to be policed by the South Lebanese Army (SLA), a surrogate of Israel under close supervision of the Israeli army.

The National Resistance Front carried out more than 11 military attacks against the Israeli army and the SLA during the past week. Israeli reports said that the bulk of attacks occurred in the Taiba area, in the central region. The attacks involved automatic weapons. No injuries were reported.

Calendar

May 25

Discussion — "12th Youth Conference to be held in Moscow" sponsored by the Voluntary Work Committee in Jerusalem, at the office of the general workers union in Jerusalem 2:00 pm.

May 28

Lecture — "The Arab Church in the Holy Land" given by Father Elias Chacour at the Ecumenical Institute — Tantour, Bethlehem Road, 4:30 pm.

May 30

Organ Concert — Bach's 18 Chorals by Elisabeth Roloff at the Church of Redeemer Jerusalem, 8:30 pm. For tickets call 282543.

SWEDISH ENVOY MEETS PALESTINIAN PERSONALITIES

A special envoy for the prime minister of Sweden visited the area this week and met with a number of Palestinians.

Ambassador Bernt Carlsson from the Swedish Foreign Ministry met in Jerusalem May 22 with Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij, deposed Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natshe, Gaza advocate Zuheir al-Rayyes, Jerusalem attorney Ziad Abu Ziad and *Al Fajr* editor Hanna Siniora. Accompanying the Swedish envoy was Anders Liden, the First Secretary of the Middle East Affairs political department, and John Haggard, the Swedish charge d'affairs in Tel Aviv.

The Palestinians explained the problem and aspirations of the Palestinian people to the Swedish envoy.

Elias Freij, who will visit Sweden on June 2, told the envoy that "if any party is seeking to enhance peace in the area they have to recognise the Palestinians' legitimate rights.

Workers

Continued from page 16

farm their fields. Hazboun told *Al Fajr* his union bloc encourages unemployed workers who own land to work on it. He added that they have coordinated activities with the Agricultural Relief Committee, a group of specialised agricultural engineers who help workers to work their land with new techniques. Members of voluntary work groups also help farmers reclaim land and plant it. Moharram al-Barghouthi, head of the voluntary work committee in the West Bank, said they sold and planted more than 30,000 olive seedlings last year. The committee also helped small Jordan valley farmers pick tomatoes, and are now preparing themselves to help harvest watermelons.

Unionists and economists agree that the most urgent task is to help residents of the occupied territories to stay on their land. Ibrahim Dakkak, head of the Engineers Union in the West Bank, told *Al Fajr* he believes that self-reliance is the most effective method to boost steadfastness. He explained that many studies in recent years on this issue all advocate reliance on the occupied territories' own resources. He added that residents are faced with two options, either to rely on themselves to remain steadfast, or to opt for the American scheme to "improve the quality of life," which in the end result will serve to normalise the *status quo* of Israeli occupation.

Hazboun and Dagher directed severe criticism against the Joint Palestinian-Jordanian Steadfastness Committee, which they said had failed to adopt a clear and comprehensive plan to boost steadfastness. Hazboun said that in the past the Joint Committee had given money to local companies that was used to buy new cars, videos and large villas. In the future, he demanded, funds should only be given to companies provided that they commit themselves to creating new job opportunities.

Dagher told *Al Fajr* that he already sees signs of a new trend of emigration in search of work, among workers in his union. He stressed that it is necessary to join hands to help Palestinians stay on their land. As one worker in the Ramallah union put it, "Workers can not sit idle and watch their children starve to death."

The Recession Nobody Noticed

Israeli Economy Squeezes Workers in the Occupied Territories

During the past year-and-a-half, the Israeli economy has been going through a deep recession. Inflation reached astronomical figures, exceeding 500 percent annually, many companies; like the textile industrial complex Ata and others, now stand on the verge of bankruptcy, and unemployment has begun to reach alarming proportions. Palestinian workers, particularly those from the West Bank and Gaza, have been the hardest hit. A recent random survey conducted by the Progressive Workers Bloc, one of the largest union blocs in the West Bank, confirmed this trend and so do workers themselves.

The roots of recession are engraved in high government spending on settlement construction and on its war machine, as well as economic mismanagement. These problems were aggravated by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which cost the Israeli government more than one million dollars a day.

Naturally, the West Bank and Gaza, whose economies have been annexed to the Israeli economy by carefully planned Israeli policy, began to suffer from the same symptoms – escalating inflation, unemployment, devaluation of wages, and the like. In fact, many sectors of the West Bank and Gaza economies, which are not protected by regulations and benefits suffered more than their Israeli counterparts. The labour sector has been particularly hard-hit: unemployment has been recorded at more than 20 percent, far more than that in Israel.

Palestinian workers began to flock to Israel for employment shortly after the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967. In the beginning, small Palestinian farmers and unemployed refugees, unable to earn their livelihood competing with the Israeli goods that flooded their markets, began to abandon their fields in search for better income in Israeli firms. By 1983, more than 95,000 Palestinian men, women and children from the West Bank were migrating daily to work in Israel. This figure includes an estimatd 20,000 "illegal" workers who are not registered. An estimated 50,000 Gazans also work in Israel. The lack of employment and low income available in the West Bank and Gaza left these workers no other choice than to take unskilled jobs in Israel, such as cleaning, serving in restaurants, and constructions that Israelis disdained. These jobs, albeit poorly paid by Israeli standards, were after all much better paying than the jobs available at home. Construction workers, for instance, were making between JD5-6 daily, as compared to JD3-4 on the West Bank.

Palestinian workers are a convenient and cheap labour force who are not entitled to the same protection from labour unions as their Israeli counterparts. For instance, Palestinian workers are not allowed to enrol in the Israeli labour federation, the Histadrut. Jalil Taleb Issa, 28, a worker who has been employed by the Herut Industrial complex in West Jerusalem since 1977, said that they are not allowed to take off on yearly vacations, sick leaves or any holiday. If a worker decides to do so, it will be deducted from his salary. During vacations for Jewish workers, Arab employees continue to work for slightly higher wages. They may not take the same time off, unless they wish to sacrifice their wages for the time they do not work.

Moreover, West Bank and Gaza workers are rarely classified according to a standard job description like their Israeli counterparts, so they never become permanent workers in any firm. This leaves them very vulnerable in times of economic hardship. George Hazboun, a leading West Bank unionist, said that classifying workers is also very important for determining their wages. He explained that West Bank workers are not classified on the pretext that they do not have the special job training to qualify them for classification.

Overall, Jewish workers in all sectors receive higher wages then their Palestinian counterparts. Issa said that even Arab workers from Jerusalem or from inside the "green line" receive better wages than West Bank and Gaza workers. "They make at least IS2000 per day more than I do," he said.

All of these factors make Palestinians in the occupied territories acutely susceptible to ups and downs in the Israeli economy. And it seems that the Israeli recession is now hitting the West Bank and Gaza in dangerous proportions. According to a random survey, conducted early this year by the Progressive Workers Bloc, wages have declined since last October by more than 30 percent.

Though many workers get monthly raises to compensate for price hikes, salaries have by no means been able to keep up with the inflation rate because the raises are much lower than the price index. Another culprit is the almost daily devaluation of the Israeli shekel. Workers from the West Bank who are paid in shekels have a hard time keeping up with their rent and other prices which are often fixed in Jordanian dinars, a very stable currency. Issa's earnings, for instance, dropped from an equivalent of JD120 in 1983 to JD69 last month. Still he has to pay JD30 monthly for rent, and to buy his clothes and other things according to the market rate of the dinar. Abu Ibrahim, another worker from the village of Yatta in the Hebron area who finds employment by soliciting at the *Musrara* "slave market" in Jerusalem, said his earnings in 1983 were between JD6 and JD8 per day. Today, wherever he works, he cannot get more than JD2. "We do not even earn enough to smoke," he told *Al Fajr*.

On the local level, unions have reported a sharp increase in the number of work disputes they have dealt with during the past few months. Adnan Dagher, secretary of the Union of Construction and Public Institution Workers in Ramallah, told *Al Fajr* that since last October they faced as many work disputes as they have over the past six years combined. This is largely a result of the economic crunch that many Palestinian companies are facing. Garo Silvana, whose family owns the Silvana chocolate factory in Ramallah, said that company sales have dropped by 20 to 25 percent. Likewise, the Jordan Plastic Company in Beit Sahour reported a drop in sales by nearly 20 percent since last November. Issa Abu Altah, the company manager, told *Al Fajr* that their profits were also down by more than 10 percent for the same period.

As a result, many companies have begun to apply austerity measures. In most Ramallah business firms, as in the rest of the West Bank, salaries were formerly paid either in dinars or its equivalent in shekels at the market value. Now, however many employers have switched to the "official" rate, which is about two-thirds of the market rate (JD1= IS3150 market rate and IS2350 official rate). In many cases, workers have gone out on strike against such measures. The most recent case was the six-day strike by all employees at *Al Quds* newspaper, after the paper's publisher decided to pay wages according to the official rate of the dinar, which meant salaries would have actually been reduced by one-third. Unlike in many other cases, and as a result of heavy publicity and solidarity campaigns from local institutions and workers, the paper's employees managed to stave off the measures. Workers at the Abu Shusheh and Abu Wajeeh Tarifi stone grinding quarries in Ramallah went to strike for the same reason. However, they were only able to retrieve a small position of their losses when the owners, on intervention from local unionists, agreed to give monthly increases to compensate for the rise in the price index.

Unemployment in the occupied territories can best be described as "concealed unemployment" because it is not felt by the general public. Hazboun, executive committee member of the Federation of Labour Unions in the West Bank, explained that because most of our workers come from rural areas, they usually return to farm their fields if they lose their jobs and therefore they are not even categorised as unemployed.

But unemployment is not concealed as far as the public is concerned. Transport companies, labour unions, and workers themselves all tell the same story. Nowadays, the workers travelling from Ramallah to Jerusalem everyday in the morning barely fill the 50 seats in each bus, one worker said. In the past, buses would be overflowing with workers crammed together in the centre of the bus. Labour unions have also recorded a sharp increase in the number of unemployed workers in their ranks. Dagher said that out of the 1200 workers enrolled in the Union of Construction and Public Institution Workers in Ramallah, more than 350 have lost their jobs in recent months. Likewise, workers say that many of their colleagues have been sent on permanent leaves. At Herut Company, for instance, Arab workers say that at least 60 labourers out of nearly 200 have been sacked since last October.

As a result many have been trying to find alternative employment. Union activists say that the trend among workers is to emigrate to Jordan and other Arab countries to look for jobs. With the recent cancellation of restrictions by the Jordanian government on movement across the bridges to Jordan, the threat of large scale emigration becomes very real, and it might actually have started and gone unnoticed.

Others are trying to solve their problems either by working in whatever jobs they can find, or by returning to

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